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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE PROSE LETTERS OF JOHN DONNE

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY BY

WILLIAM DAVIES

©

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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ABSTRACT

The Prose Letters of John Donne is a critical edition containing every prose letter and fragment known to scholarship. Two hundred and twenty-five letters are included in the text of the edition, and a further fifteen along with a number of extracts from various letters appear in the various appendices. This arrangement establishes the canon of the letters. The letters are dated and annotated and, with the exception of the appendices, arranged in chronological order. There is enough evidence available from the thirty-eight holographs and from collating the various printed seventeenth-century texts to establish the relative authority of the various texts. Chronological arrangement of the letters reveals new biographical information about Donne's career.

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REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Each work listed here includes the full title and abbreviation. All references in the text use the abbreviations only.

Bald, *Donne & the Drurys*	*Donne and the Drurys*. Cambridge, 1959.
Bald, *Life*	*John Donne: A Life*. Oxford, 1970.
Feil	*Sir Tobie Matthew and His Collection of Letters*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1962.
Gardner, *Divine Poems*	*John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner. Oxford, 1952.
Gardner, *Elegies etc*.	*John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Helen Gardner. Oxford, 1965.
Gosse	*The Life and Letters of John Donne*, by E. Gosse. London, 1899. 2 vols.
Grierson	*The Poems of John Donne*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson. Oxford, 1912. 2 vols.
Keynes	*A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's*. 4th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.
Letters	*Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*. 1651.
Milgate, *Epithalamions*	*John Donne*: The Epithalamions, Anniversaries *and* Epicedes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
Milgate, *Satires, etc*.	*John Donne: The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters*, ed. W. Milgate. Oxford, 1967.
Sermons	*The Sermons of John Donne*, eds. G. R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson. University of California Press, 1953-62. 10 vols.
Shapiro	"The Text of Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons*." *RES* 7 (1939): 291-330.
Shapiro, "The Burley Letters"	*TLS* 12 September 1952: 597.
Simpson, *Prose Works*	*A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, by Evelyn M. Simpson. 2nd ed. Oxford, 1948.

Smith	*The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, by Logan Pearsall Smith. Oxford, 1907. 2 vols.
Tobie Mathews Collection	*A Collection of Letters, made by S^{r} Tobie Mathews K^{t}*. 1660.

THE SPELLING OF PROPER NAMES

Surnames and place names are spelled inconsistently in seventeenth-century practice; consequently, subsequent references by various authors perpetuate various spellings. Confusion over names is further complicated in Donne's case by his friendship with two Sir Robert Kers: first, Sir Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester, the King's favorite, who became Earl of Somerset and who was banished in disgrace for his part in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury; and second, his cousin also named Sir Robert Ker, who later became the Earl of Ancrum. It is this second Sir Robert Ker who became an intimate friend of Donne's. I distinguish between the two Kers by adding the favorite's titles, either Rochester or Somerset. Both men's surnames are variously spelled Karre, Carr, and Carre, which adds to the confusion.

Several other names which appear throughout the letters also have various spellings, which inevitably produces some inconsistencies in the way they appear in the text. These are listed below. Less commonly used names have alternate spellings provided in the Notes.

John Bruer	Brewer
Sir Nicholas Carew	Carey
Mrs. Cokayne	Cockayne, Cockaine, Cokain
John Donne	Dunne, Dunn
Sir Robert and Lady Drury	Drewry
George (and Martha) Garrard	Garet, Garrat, Garret, Gerrard, Gherard
Sir Henry Goodyer	Goodere, Goodeere
Sir Tobie Mathew	Matthew, Mathews, Matthews
Sir Robert Rich	Riche
Elizabeth Stanley, Lady Huntington	Huntingdon
Bridget White, Lady Kingsmill	Kingsmel
Abury Hatch	Aldborough Hatch
Mitcham	Micham, Michim, Michin
Twickenham	Twicknam

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Scope of Donne's Letters

Number of Letters

Among Jacobean writers, only Sir Francis Bacon has left more extant letters than Donne has, and more Bacon letters survive only because of Bacon's many official letters and state papers. The large number of surviving Donne letters (about 235) compared to those of other Jacobean writers is largely due to the publishing of two-thirds of them in various seventeenth-century publications. The extant Donne letters, however, must be only a very small portion of the letters that Donne actually wrote. For example, we know that Donne was in the habit of writing Sir Henry Goodyer a weekly letter. In a letter presumed to have been written in 1604, Donne alludes to writing frequently to Goodyer; in 1606 he mentions forwarding letters for Goodyer as if it were a regular occurrence; and in March 1607 Donne makes the first indisputable reference to writing to Goodyer each Tuesday. Donne remained friendly with Goodyer until the latter's death on 18 March 1627 (Bald, 544), and in a letter dated as late as 18 October 1622 Donne implies that he still writes weekly letters to Goodyer when he says, "I would have intermitted this week without writing, if I had not found the name of my Lady Huntington in your Letter" (Letter No. 185). Donne's last extant letter to Goodyer was written on 21 December 1625. In all, seventy-two surviving Donne letters are believed addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer, which makes him easily Donne's most frequent correspondent. Nevertheless, what remains of the Donne-Goodyer correspondence must constitute only a small fraction of Donne's letters to Goodyer, considering that Donne's friendship with Goodyer spanned twenty-three years and for a large portion of that time Donne at least attempted to write weekly. In fact, Donne probably wrote more letters to Goodyer alone than are now extant.

It is impossible to estimate how many letters Donne actually wrote in his lifetime, but the number must be in the thousands. Yet, for some years, such as 1618, there are no surviving letters. In other years, such as 1608, we have as many as twenty-three letters. The years for which we have most letters suggest the diversity that must have marked Donne's correspondence. For example, in June 1610 Donne wrote to Henry, Prince of Wales, presenting a copy of his book, Pseudo-Martyr, and later in the same month began a sequence of letters to Mrs. Bridget White (Lady Kingsmill), a correspondence which began, flourished, and stopped in 1610, if we count only the extant letters, and was not resumed until 1624. However, in a letter from Donne to George Garrard written on about 17 January 1612 (Letters No. 95), Donne alludes to expecting letters from Lady Kingsmill. What remains of this correspondence probably would not have come to light at all except that Donne's son dedicated the 1651 collection of Donne's letters to her. The other Donne letters that we have come from a few sources (those kept by Donne's friends). One wonders about the number of other correspondents, particularly private citizens such as Bridget White to whom Donne may have written and also about the extent of Donne's correspondence with people with whom we know that he associated, for example, Bishop Morton, to whom no letters remain.

Purposes of Letters

Donne's letters were written for a variety of purposes: there are letters in which Donne's sole purpose is to ask for a buck for the table or to borrow a horse; there is a postscript in which Donne informs his mother-in-law that the items that she requested Anne Donne to get for her in London have been sent; there are letters that are merely invitations, and others that make or accept business appointments. Other letters contain news, although Donne was careful about what news he sent and to whom; and, finally, there are literary letters, primarily essays or homilies (Donne's term). Out of this variety of letters which were written for many different purposes and audiences, it is easier to generalize about Donne's writing techniques than about the contents of the letters. That is, Donne uses similar imagery and similar rhetorical devices for widely different subject matter and will use conceits for his immediate rhetorical purpose, without regard to earlier uses which may use contradictory logic.

Why Do We Read Donne?

Various reasons have been put forward for reading Donne's poetry: "the connexion of metaphysical wit with the complex and far-reaching changes in men's conception of Nature," his "life and passion and art," "the extraordinary interest of his mind and character," his "skepticism and paradox," his "dissociation of sensibility." But these are old arguments now. For various reasons Donne has been accepted into the canon and his prose has, by and large, followed his poetry. In 1912, in an article about the relationship between Donne's sermons and his poetry, Evelyn Spearing had to assert the value of the sermon and his other prose works:

> Yet these prose writings of Donne are valuable both in themselves and in relation to his other works. Donne's intense individuality is evident in everything he produced, and the same characteristics that are stamped on his early love-poems and satires, as well as on the Holy Sonnets of his more sober middle life, are found also in all his prose works from the clever but flippant Paradoxes and Problems or Ignatius his Conclave to the stately magnificence of his last sermons. (40)

Donne's prose works have received the attention that Spearing asked for, with one exception--the prose letters. Donne's prose letters have been criticized as "boring," as disappointing sources of biographical information and literary comment, and have remained neglected. But as Maurer has pointed out in one of the few articles on the letters, they have a "poetical familiarity": they share many characteristics of Donne's poetry and other literary works. I shall briefly discuss several examples, the first being Donne's use of the concept of himself as a "nothing." This is a conceit that Donne uses in some of his most famous poems, including "A Nocturnall" and "A Valediction of Weeping," as well as in several verse letters to the Countess of Bedford and in a number of prose letters written to various correspondents. One might call it the quintessential metaphysical conceit because it contrasts substance and essence and being and non-being. Donne's use of the idea of himself as a "nothing" illustrates two aspects of the prose letters: their essential similarities with Donne's other writing, and their usefulness for examining concepts used in other writing.

The first prose letter in which Donne describes himself as a nothing was written to Sir Henry Goodyer on 24 June 1607. Donne concludes the letter, "Sir, if I were any thing, my love to you might multiply it and dignifie it: But infinite nothings are but one such: Yet since even Chymeraes have some name, and titles, I am also Yours" (Letter No. 35).

He first defines "nothing" in a prose letter to Sir Henry Goodyer, a friend who introduced Donne to the Countess of Bedford and other patronesses. Donne has a special and consistent meaning for the word "nothing." He is a "nothing" because he has no place in the world; as far as the world is concerned, he does not exist:

> I would fain do something; but that I cannot tell what, is no wonder. For to chuse, is to do: but to be no part of any body, is to be nothing. At most, the greatest persons, are but great wens, and excrescences; men of wit and delightful conversation, but as moales for ornament, except they be so incorporated into the body of the world, that they contribute something to the sustentation of the whole. (Letter No. 58)

In another letter to Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne specifically states that he is "none" and a "nothing" because he has no rank:

> . . . you have many worthy friends of all ranks, yet I adde something, since I which am of none, would fain be your friend too. There is some of the honour and some of the degrees of a Creation, to make a friendship of nothing. (Letter No. 43)

Donne uses the idea relatively frequently (ten times) in the thirty-four prose letters extant from 1607 until 1612. He uses the idea once in 1614 in a letter to Sir Robert Ker asking for a position at court: "But Sir, everie addition perimagins a beeing, and the time of my beeing and Creation is not yet come: which I am sure you will advance; because else I am no competent Subject of your favours, and additions" (Letter No. 120). Donne does not use the conceit again in a prose letter until 1630. In a letter to George Garrard, he writes:

> I know not which of us wonne it by the
>   hand, in the last change of Letters. If
> you wonne, you wonne nothing, because
> I am nothing, or whatsoever I am, you
> wonne nothing, because I was all yours be-
> fore. (Letter No. 222)

In this letter Donne, discouraged by his illness and his inability to perform his church duties, reverts to the conceit which he used to express his feelings of worthlessness.

As noted, Donne's idea of himself as a nothing also appears in "A Nocturnall," "A Valediction of Weeping," and in his verse letters to the Countess of Bedford. In Donne's poems written to the Countess of Bedford, he describes himself as "a nothing," a supplicant who is asking the Countess to make something of him. Donne's special use of "nothing" or "anything" in the verse letters and other poems and prose letters consistently describes his lack of social position after his marriage and consequent dismissal by Egerton.

The verse letter to the Countess of Bedford in which Donne first compares himself to a "nothing" is the fourth, "T' have written then." Donne states:

> In this [replying at once to a letter from the Countess],
> my debt I seem'd loath to confesse,
> In that [not replying], I seem'd to shunne beholdingnesse.
> But 'tis not soe: nothings, as I am, may
> Pay all they have, and yet have all to pay. (Milgate 95)

Donne makes a very similar remark in line 5 of his fifth verse letter, "To the Countess of Bedford at New-yeares Tide":

> This twilight of two yeares, not past nor next,
> Some emblem is of mee, or I of this,
> Who Meteor-like, of stuffe and forme perplext,
> Whose *what*, and *where*, in disputation is,
> If I should call mee *anything*, should misse. (Milgate 98)

If Donne were of noble birth but without employment, as he states in his prose letter, he would be only a useless ornament to society. Worse, since he has neither birth nor employment, he has no purpose; as far as society is concerned, he does not exist; he is a nothing. In the fifth verse letter Donne goes on to comment on his insignificant social position which is the reason for his nothingness. He suggests that he cannot portray the countess's virtue to the world because everyone will doubt him:

> . . . yet they [everyone] will doubt how I,
> One corne of one low anthills dust, and lesse,
> Should name, know, or expresse a thing so high,
> And not an inch, measure infinity. (Milgate 99)

No one, that is, will believe that Donne, who in terms of the world is less important than a piece of dust in an ant hill, and who is less than an inch, can be capable of measuring the Countess's infinite goodness. Donne discusses goodness in terms of the world, too; he refers to the countess's responsibilities as a person of rank and the virtue she practises in meeting them.

In "A Nocturnall" Donne begins by describing himself as he does in the verse and prose letters and then goes on to develop the idea. He has been a "nothing" all along by comparison with the lady because any existence he has is dependent on her. Her withdrawal from the world makes what was already nothing a new and intensified kind of nothing. He is, as he says in stanza 2, "every dead thing" (some MSS. say "a very dead thing"):

> In whom love wrought new Alchimie.
> For his art did expresse
> A quintessence even from nothingnesse.
> (Milgate 84-85)

He makes the point again in stanza 4: "but I am by her death . . . / Of the first nothing, the Elixer grown." He concludes his development of the conceit in stanza 5, the final stanza of the poem: "But I am None; nor will my Sunne renew" (Gardner, Elegies 85). Donne's statement in Letter 35 that "infinite nothings are but one such" suggests that Donne is again making something out of nothing. Donne also uses this conceit in a slightly different way in "A Valediction: of Weeping." In this poem (which many critics assume was written to Anne Donne), both Donne and the lady are "nothing" when separated: "So thou and I are nothing then, when on a divers shore."

Although Donne develops the conceit of being a "nothing" in various ways, all are consistent with his definition, and illustrate the importance Donne attaches to being of the world and not separate from it.

Another example of the poetic nature of Donne's prose letters occurs in a passage in a letter to Magdalen Herbert; Donne begins by comparing his letter to a ship and concludes by comparing himself to Caesar and his letters to Caesar's wife. Donne begins the passage using a conceit common to the letters and the songs and sonnets (his letter or poem is a traveller journeying from Donne to the lady); he continues with the exaggerated praise of his verse letters to great ladies (Magdalen Herbert is worth more than Virginia; in fact, she is worth more than the whole new world of which Virginia makes up "a wretched inch"); and he concludes with a harshness partly found in the songs and sonnets ("If this sound like flattery, tear it out") which he develops in a way more characteristic of the elegies or satires ("I am to my Letters as rigid a Puritane, as Caesar to his Wife"):

> Yet, I have given this [letter] Licence to Travel, but I know not whether [whither], nor it. It is therefore rather a Pinnace to discover; and the intire Colony of Letters, of Hundreds and Fifties, must follow; whose employment is more honourable, than that which our State meditates to Virginia, because you are worthier than all that Countrey, of which that is a wretched inch; for you have better treasure, and a harmlessness. If this sound like a flattery, tear it out. I am to my Letters as rigid a Puritane, as Caesar was to his Wife. (Letters No. 36)

This use of figurative language is not surprising if we consider the letters as a unified part of Donne's writing. The letters have, however, been relegated to an adjunct of Donne's literary writing and treated as a disappointing source of bibliographical information and an undeveloped genre of little worth. John Carey, for example, suggests that the letters are "by and large, extremely dull--indeed, perversely and elaborately dull in a way in which, we feel, the letters of a great poet have no right to be" (45). And yet Carey goes on to discuss these letters primarily by comparing them to Donne's poems. Carey, for example, glosses a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (Letters No. 86) by comparing it to "The Extasie," and he glosses a letter to George Garrard (Letters No. 96) by comparing it to both "The Extasie" and "A Valediction: forbidding mourning." Conversely, editors of Donne's poetry have frequently glossed the poems with passages from the prose letters. Long before Carey used "The Extasie" to explain Donne's letter to Goodyer, Grierson used the same prose letter to gloss "The Extasie." In Grierson's time, however, no judgements of the prose letters had been made. My point is that many of Donne's prose letters share both the figurative language and the subject matter of the poems. The qualities that have been admired in Donne as a poet have not been appreciated in Donne as a letter writer. Instead, critics have narrowly lamented the lack of biographical information.

Donne's Newsless Letters

Carey is one critic who discusses Donne's "newsless" letters and attributes them to Donne's "pathological self-absorption." There are, however, a number of reasons why extant Donne letters do not always contain news. One reason may be simply that for Donne's correspondents and his editors the letters which took the form of essays were of more enduring interest than contemporary news and were more suitable examples of epistolatory elegance. Certainly, this type of letter is more commonly found in the letters collected and printed in the seventeenth century than are those Donne letters subsequently discovered in manuscript form. But whether we have collected a disproportionate number of "newsless" letters is a secondary consideration to why Donne wrote them. There are some indications in the letters themselves that indicate very different reasons than Carey suggests. Letter writing during Donne's time could be "a very dangerous business," to borrow a phrase from Captain Hook. For example, in a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (Letters No. 41) written from France in January 1611/12, Donne implies that his letters have been intercepted by the king's spies and asks Goodyer when he next writes to indicate how many letters he has received from Donne:

> When it shall not trouble you to write to me, I pray do me the favour to tell me, how many you have received from me, for I have now much just reason to imagine, that some of my Pacquets have had more honour then I wished them: which is to be delivered into the hands of greater personages, then I addressed them unto.

The constant concern that Donne expresses about how many of his letters have been received by his correspondent, then, does not result only from the ad hoc postal arrangements and the possible negligence of the letter carriers characteristic of the time. Having letters intercepted by spies was a real possibility. Knowledge of this possibility made Donne extremely circumspect. Often he avoided sending news because simply recounting it might suggest a dangerous opinion. At other times he wrote as if he expected his letters to be intercepted and read. For example, during his visit to France Donne received news of the death of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, and the general censure of him that followed by those whom he had oppressed. Donne writes about the libels as if he were speaking directly to the king; Donne says that the libels are so "flat" and "tastelesse" that they must have been made by Salisbury's friends (i.e., the libels were simply not credible). Donne then attacks those libelling Salisbury in death for having no "honest pretence." If Salisbury were alive, Donne maintains, the libellers could at least claim to hope for his reform. Donne states that libels can sometimes appropriately act as a check on great men who are above the law and, as contemporary English writers often did, gives an Italian example, the Duke of Lerma. But Donne will not allow libels against royal authority. Donne protests that he is glad that libels were not written against the Roman Emperors during their lives because "that must have occasioned tumult, and contempt, against so high and Soveraign persons." Moreover, libels against Emperors must not be allowed after their deaths because such libels would be "ignoble" and "uselesse."

But Donne provides even stronger evidence in this letter of the necessity for extreme discretion in writing about others in private letters. Donne says, in effect, that in England neither truth nor expressing a private opinion were adequate defenses against the charge of libel; whereas the libels written about the Emperors after their deaths "did a little escape the nature of libels, by being subscribed and avowed: which excuse would not have served in the Star-chamber, where sealed Letters have been judged Libels."

Occasionally, Donne would use another tactic to protect himself when sending news in his letters: he would not sign them. In a letter (No. 49) to his close friend Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne describes a quarrel between the Earl of Herford and Lord Mounteagle, and the Earl of Salisbury's attempt to arbitrate it. Donne scrupulously avoids choosing sides or discussing the effectiveness of Salisbury's action; he merely reports. Nevertheless, Donne must have felt that this news was dangerous even to report because he ends the letter, "You know me without a name, and I know not how this Letter goes." Even without his name, Donne's handwriting may have incriminated him, if his letters were being consistently intercepted by the king or a powerful courtier. His discretion here, however, would prevent untrustworthy messengers from recognizing a ready opportunity to market a letter.

Donne's "newsless letters," then, are in large part examples of his discretion, a quality he describes in a verse letter to his patroness, the Countess of Bedford, as "Natures first lesson" and "a wisemans Soule" (Milgate 102, ll. 37, 40). Even though Donne was only on the fringes of the court, he was aware of the constant intrigues and the dangers that they posed for all regardless of their social position. In another verse letter to the Countess of Bedford, Donne tells her that God will

> . . . provide you keyes, and locks, to spie,
> And scape spies, to good ends, and hee will show
> What you may not acknowledge, what not know.
> (Milgate 100, ll. 53-55)

Donne obviously followed his own advice in his prose letters, and Donne's friends acknowledged his discretion.

Donne's discretion was one aspect of his ability to function as a courtier. Also related to his discretion was his ability to analyze court politics and to write appropriate letters in pursuit of appointments or grants, both for himself and for others. Stanley Johnson has shown that one of the 1651 Letters was written by Donne for Sir Henry Goodyer to send to the Earl of Salisbury. Apparently, Goodyer often reused portions or ideas from Donne's letters to him in letters to important figures at court. However, Goodyer relied not only on Donne's writing ability but his sense of strategy as well. In a letter from Goodyer in which Goodyer had asked Donne to write a number of letters for him to pursue a grant or position at court, Donne corrects Goodyer's strategy:

> You mention two more letters then I send. The time was not too short for me to have written them, (for I had an whole night) but it was too short to work a beleefe in me, that you could think to go so divers ways to one end. I see not, (for I see not the reason) how those letters could well have concurred with these, nor how those would well have been drawn from them, in a businesse wholly relating to this house. I was not lazie in disobeying you, but (I thought) only thrifty, and your request of those was not absolute, but conditioned, if I had leasure. . . . The good Countesse [the Countess of Bedford] spake somewhat of your desire of letters; but I am afraid, she is not a proper Mediatrix to those persons, but I counsell in the dark. (Letters No. 55)

Donne's writing and analytical abilities were obviously widely respected by others at court. James offered him preferment in the church, and members of different factions were his patrons: the Countess of Bedford was an early patron interested in his poetry, and Somerset promised Donne an appointment at court as a secretary.

Donne had one other reason for limiting the amount of news in his letters, and that reason has to do with Jacobean protocol. When writing to superiors one could never imply that one was superior in any sense, and to write letters with news is to imply that the writer knows more than the reader. Even when Donne was in France he could not send news to people like Lord Hay or Sir Robert Ker because, presumably, if they were interested they would have their own sources of information operating at a higher level than Donne could. Donne discusses the difficulties of writing about news in letters to superiors in a number of letters. For example, in a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (Letters No. 39), Donne explains that because he can relay no news of the quality to which Goodyer is accustomed, he will send none:

> If I were by your appointment your Referendarie for news, I should write but short Letters, because the times are barren. The low Countries, which used to be the Mart of news for this season, suffering also, or rather enjoying a vacation. Since therefore I am but mine own Secretary (and what's that?) I were excusable if I writ nothing, since I am so: Besides that, your much knowledge brings you this disadvantage, that as stomachs accustomed to delicacies finde nothing new or pleasing to them when they are sick; so you can hear nothing from me (though the Countrey perchance make you hungry) which you know not. Therefore instead of a Letter to you, I send you one to another, to the best Lady, who did me the honour to acknowledge the receit of one of mine, by one of hers . . . . (pp. 116-17)

In a letter addressed to Sir John Harrington (the Countess of Bedford's brother) (Letters No. 40), Donne also excuses himself for having nothing worthy to write about and suggests that Lord Harrington consider his letter as a curiosity. Donne cannot pretend to offer Harrington news from court, nor is he (Donne) a fit subject of news for such an eminent person as Harrington. Therefore he makes his letter out of the most insubstantial material and asks Lord Harrington to consider the letter's consequent novelty.

This problem of sending news to superiors was not limited to Donne. In a letter to the Queen of Bohemia, the Countess of Bedford begins by discussing it, even though theirs was a relationship which one might think would have made such a discussion unnecessary. Certainly, the relative social status of the Countess of Bedford and the personal relationship between the two women was closer than that between Donne and many of his correspondents.

The Queen of Bohemia was raised in the household of the Countess of Bedford's father, Sir John Harrington. The two women had been friends since childhood and the Countess of Bedford was a great lady in her own right. Nevertheless, protocol was observed. The Countess of Bedford begins her letter:

> You have so many servants here, at the present, who, I know, take care to give you an account of all Parliament businesses, worth the Writing, as I (who have but by second report, the passages of both Houses) should deserve rather blame, than thanks of your Majesty, to follow, with my imperfect relation, what you, at the first hand, receive from them, who are actours themselves, in the great affairs, now on the Stage of this our world, Where none playes his part, with so due applause, as your Excellent Brother. . . . (T.M.C. 58-59)

The Countess of Bedford goes on to describe the admirable conduct of the Prince on this occasion. The Countess of Bedford was a member of the Protestant faction at court and was obviously pleased at the failure of the Spanish match. Charles and Buckingham were now antagonistic toward Spain, and their report to Parliament was widely approved of because it reflected popular opinion which had all along been against the match. The Queen of Bohemia, like the Countess of Bedford, was a supporter of the Protestant cause, in part because of her marriage to the Elector of the Palatinate, the Protestant champion in Europe, who had accepted the offer of the Crown of Bohemia, but had been driven out by Catholic forces. The Countess of Bedford thus knew that her news would appeal to the Queen of Bohemia.

The Countess of Bedford's letter also touches on another aspect of the delicate nature of writing letters with political news when she begins the conclusion of her letter by assuring the Queen of her honesty and disinterestedness and asking her to encourage the Prince by writing to him and reporting what she has heard:

> And, Madam, give me leave to wish, that you would in one Letter, at least, take notice of what you hear of him, from them, who will neither flatter him, nor dissemble with you; since there is no bodie who doth well, but is glad to hear thereof. (T.M.C. 58-59)

Donne, then, faced the same constraints in writing his letters as others at the time, with the additional burden of being out of close touch with the court for over 10 years. Not surprisingly, Donne's letters contain less news during the period that he was out of public life. His trip to France in 1611/12 with Sir Robert Drury produced a number of letters which included news of the French political situation, but his news about Englishmen abroad or at home was probably curtailed because of his knowledge that his letters were being intercepted. Donne's letters include a considerable amount of personal news between 1612 and 1616, when Donne was most actively pursuing preferment. He wrote no letters full of news during his trip to Europe with Viscount Doncaster's embassy because of diplomatic protocol. After his return, Donne's letters reflect the general make-up of the collection: some are personal, some are business, some are essays, and some contain news. Donne may have been more self-absorbed than some other men, yet his correspondence is not evidence of any kind of "pathological self-absorption" but, rather, a scrupulous concern with protecting himself and his reputation.

Donne's View of Letter Writing

Donne's view of letter writing has been discussed in a number of articles. Much has been made of his "newsless" letters, his view of writing letters as "ecstacy," and his view of the importance of letters as expressions of friendship and as "conveyances" of himself. Reading Donne's letters in chronological order helps to put Donne's ideas about letter writing into perspective. Several things can be said. First, Donne's prose letters (naturally enough) reflect his contemporary literary interests. Early letters (before 1603) are more likely to be satirical and cynical, like the elegies and some songs and sonnets. Beginning about 1603 (James's accession), Donne's cynicism is replaced by a belief in the importance of virtue and of displaying goodness through action in the world, even though the world remains a corrupt place. This change seems to have been brought about by the promise of a new era under James I and also by the appointment of some of Donne's friends (especially Wotton) to important positions. Considering that Donne himself had lost his position with Sir Thomas Egerton and had no prospects, his new stance suggests generosity and maturity. In a way, his friendships demanded this new view of the world. Friends receiving court appointments would not appreciate letters condemning the court, but also the very appointment of Donne's friends, whom he considered to be virtuous, was a sign for him that times were improving. From about 1603 to 1612 Donne's letters are largely occupied with discussions of friendship and the difficulty of achieving virtue in private and moral matters. His letters indicate an attempt to work out a moral philosophy and to reconcile himself to his circumstances, and unsuccessful attempts to return to public life, which he regarded as a superior existence not only for the material rewards but because one's virtue could be fully realized only through action in the world. The prose letters during this period are closely related to the verse letters to great ladies and to some of the songs and sonnets.

From 1612 to 1614, when Donne accompanied Sir Robert Drury to France, Donne's topics change, and to some extent his ideas do, too. These letters begin to contain more news; they also contain more personal information about Donne's attempts to secure employment and his reluctance to continue writing poetry. His conception of virtue changes as well. Instead of speaking of virtue as a general quality, a "balme," a way of life, Donne adopts the more conventional usage of virtue as specific moral qualities. Donne's discussions of friendship become less frequent and shorter as he is re-immersed into public life. In 1615 Donne took orders, and his letters reflect his new profession but continue to be primarily about his social life, career, church affairs, and news from court. Donne's poor health is a topic that is found throughout all periods of his prose letters, from the early letters in the Burley MS. to his last letters to Mrs. Cokayne, but from about 1624 Donne's letters dwell more on his ill health, on his approaching death, and on the next life. Later letters sometimes begin with prayers, and

Donne's earlier discussions of morality are replaced by specifically Christian meditations, prayers, and homilies. Instead of speaking for himself, Donne now has come to write letters "dictated by the spirit of God." Whereas in the letters before 1615 Donne spoke of his meditations or homilies as inferior to letters with news, in the last five years or so of his life he has come to regard homilies as superior to ordinary letters.

Donne's statements about letter writing in the prose letters are like his discussions of many subjects in the poems and elsewhere: he is not always consistent in the views that he expresses. However, he is consistent in that he constantly looks for the cleverest thing to say given his rhetorical situation. He is also consistent in his concern about living life according to principle, whether that is expressed through cynicism and disgust with society in the early letters, through more or less secular moralizing in subsequent letters, through his punctilious concern for correct action in his day-to-day duties in the church, or through his increasing concern with expressing his faith in God while facing death.

Donne's Comments on Letter Writing in the Prose Letters

One of Donne's best known comments on letter writing is that it is an "extasie," an essential part of friendship, inseparable from the spiritual nature of friendship:

> I Make account that this writing of letters, when it is with any seriousness, is a kind of extasie, and a departure and secession and suspension of the soul, w^{ch} doth then communicate it self to two bodies: And as I would

> every day provide for my souls last convoy, though I know not when I shall die, and perchance I shall never die; so for these extasies in letters, I oftentimes deliver my self over in writing when I know not when those letters shall be sent to you, and many times they never are, for I have a little satisfaction in seeing a letter written to you upon my table, though I meet no opportunity of sending it. (Letter No. 42, 9 October 1607)

In a letter to George Garrard probably written on 7 February 1612, Donne writes in similar manner:

> But, Sir, in the offices of so spirituall a thing as friendship, so momentary a thing as time, must have no consideration. I keep it [your letter] therefore to read every day, as newly written: to which vexation it must be subject, till you relieve it with another. (Letter No. 89)

Donne writes another similar passage to the Countess of Bedford, probably in August 1613:

> AMongst many other dignities which this letter hath by being received and seen by you, it is not the least, that it was prophesied of before it was born: for your brother told you in his letter, that I had written: he did me much honour both in advancing my truth so farre as to call a promise an act already done; and to provide a means of doing him a service in this act . . . . It makes no difference that this [Donne's letter] came not the same day, nor bears the same date as his; for though in inheritances and worldly possessions we consider the dates of Evidence, yet in Letters, by which we deliver over our affections, and assurances of friendship, and the best faculties of our souls, times and daies cannot have interest, nor be considerable, because that which passes by them, is eternall, and out of the measure of time.
> (Letter No. 115)

These passages have been taken to mean how highly Donne regarded the value of letters as expressions of the spirituality of friendship by R. J. Corthell ("'Frendships Sacraments': John Donne's Familiar

Letters"), but they are also examples of wit. The incongruity of the circumstances surrounding these letters makes them witty. The first of these passages arises from Donne's inability to find someone to take a letter to Goodyer and his not knowing where Goodyer is, even if he had a messenger. The second passage arises from Donne's inability to discover the date of a letter from Garrard which he is anxious to know, and his threat to reread Garrard's every day until he receives another letter indicates his desire for more letters with news from England. The third passage is simply an elaborate excuse for a late letter.

These passages and other similar passages have been taken to mean that Donne regarded expressions of the spiritual aspect of friendship as the most important purpose of letters. Other prose letters by Donne, however, contradict this view. For example, in a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer written in January 1611/12, Donne states that letters need some kind of substance:

> You know that for aire we
> are sure we apprehend and enjoy it, but
> when this aire is rarified into fire, we begin
> to dispute whether it be an element, or no:
> so when Letters have a convenient handsome
> body of news, they are Letters; but when they
> are spun out of nothing, they are nothing,
> or but apparitions, and ghosts, with such hollow
> sounds, as he that hears them, knows not what
> they said. You (I think) and I am much
> of one sect in the Philosophy of love; which though
> it be directed upon the minde, doth inhere in
> the body, and find piety entertainment there: so
> have Letters for their principall office, to be
> seals and testimonies of mutuall affection,
> but the materialls and fuell of them should
> be a confident and mutuall communicating
> of those things which we know. How shall
> I then who know nothing write letters? Sir,
> I learn knowledge enough out of yours to me.
> (Letter No. 86)

Donne's view here is that love (friendship) is expressed through the sharing of news and ideas (knowledge). In an earlier letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (probably written in 1604), Donne states that letters are the best conveyance for knowledge and love, but treats them as separate kinds of letters.

> No other kinde of conveyance is better for knowledge, or love: What treasures of Morall knowledge are in Senecaes Letters to onely one Lucililius? and what of Naturall in Plinies? . . . But it is the other capacity which must make mine acceptable, that they are also the best conveyors of love. (Letter No. 28)

In another letter to George Garrard written explicitly to ask for news (likely in early December 1611), Donne pretends that the news he requests is secondary to a sign of Garrard's friendship. Donne begins by saying that he will write a short letter, which, although too short to thank Garrard for his kindnesses, may seem too long to Garrard because it asks a favor--that Garrard write him a letter with news from London:

> If you will but write that you give me leave to keep that name still [the name of friend], it shall be the gold of your Letter: and for allay, put in as much newes as you will. We are in a place where scarce any money appeares, but base: as, I confesse, all matters of Letters is in respect of the testimonies of friendship; but obey the corruption of this place, and fill your Letters with worse stuffe then your own. (Letter No. 83)

In other letters Donne takes various stances. In a letter written to Sir Henry Goodyer containing some general reflections on the libels directed at the Earl of Salisbury (a distant cousin of Goodyer's) after his death, Donne discounts his "meditations": "you will perchance reade so low meditations as these" (Letter No. 97). In another he apologizes for mere talk or gossip: "this letter shall but talke, not discourse; it shall but gossip, not consider, nor consult, so it is made halfe with a prejudice of being lost by the way" (Letter No. 63). In a third he apologizes for a "discourse":

> But, Sir, I am beyond my purpose; I meant to write a letter, and I am fallen into a discourse, and I doe not only take you from some businesse, but I make you a new businesse by drawing you into these meditations. In which yet let my opennes be an argument of such love as I would fain expresse in some worthier fashion. (Letter No. 47)

In a final example, Donne begins his letter disclaiming that he is writing letters for any specific purpose:

> I Send not my Letters as tribute, nor interest, nor recompence, nor for commerce, nor as testimonialls of my love, nor provokers of yours, nor to justifie my custome of writing, nor for a vent and utterance of my meditations; For my letters are either above or under all such offices, yet I write very affectionately, and I chide and accuse my selfe of diminishing that affection which sends them, when I aske my selfe why. (Letter No. 59)

In the course of the letter Donne tells Goodyer that just as his letters do not embody a specific purpose, he (Donne) is willing to be accepted by Goodyer in whatever role Goodyer chooses for him. Donne concludes this letter by discussing the superiority of short prayers to long ones and ends by criticizing this long letter for having the same faults as long prayers:

> Even this letter is some example of such infirmity; which being intended for a letter is extended and strayed into a Homily. And whatsoever is not what it was purposed, is worse. Therefore I shall at last end like a letter by assuring you I am &c. (Letter No. 59)

Donne's views of letter writing change over the course of his life. As he says in a letter written in 1628 to Mrs. Cokayne to console her on the death of her son:

> If I had had such an occasion as this
> to have written to you, in the first year of our
> acquaintance, I had been likelier to have
> presented you with an Essay of Morall Comfort.
> Now my Letter may well be excused, if it
> amount to an Homilie. My profession and my
> willingnesse, to stay long upon so good an office,
> as to assist you, will bear it. (Letter No. 216)

Whereas in his early letters Donne's use of the word "homily" suggests the sense of a "tedious moralizing discourse" (O.E.D.), his later use of the term suggests the other meaning, "a religious discourse addressed to a congregation" (O.E.D.). A number of Donne's later letters begin with prayers or describe themselves as homilies in the positive sense, including Letters No. 190, 204, 205, 216, and 219.

Donne's views of letter writing, then, reflect his changing views of life. As a young writer he seizes on conventional topics such as the city vs. country debate, and writes about the kind of friendship that appeals to young men who like to face the world as part of a group. Donne's later discussions of friendship reflect his isolation, his lack of employment, and his lack of a place in the world. Thus, for a time friendship becomes the most important topic in Donne's letters. It is replaced by descriptions of Donne's search for employment, which in turn give way to descriptions of his professional and social life as that develops. Over the course of Donne's life, his letters gradually discard general discussions of ethics and morals in favor of specifically Christian ones.

Donne's Discussions of His Illness

Illness was an extremely important part of Donne's life. Imagery related to illness (and death) dominates much of his work. Two obvious examples are, first, Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, written during December 1623, in which Donne combines a description of an illness (relapsing fever) with meditations, expostulations, and prayers; and, second, Donne's sermon "Death's duel," a meditation on death written while he was dying (of stomach cancer) in 1631 and given at Court by Donne just over a month before his death. However, the prose letters show that Donne's preoccupation with illness was present at least from early adulthood, and was probably lifelong, caused, no doubt, by his own poor health and intensified by the deaths of six of his twelve children and his wife (see Letter No. 217 to Mrs. Cokayne).

In the prose letters references to various illnesses occur frequently. Their chronology can be traced from letters written by Donne as a young man and through his adult years. Donne writes of being ill in his letters concerning his marriage to Anne More which were written to Sir George More and Sir Thomas Egerton in 1601/2 (Loseley MSS). In the winter of 1608/9 he was seriously ill with neuritis (Letters, pp. 137-38). In 1612 he was ill at Paris while on his visit to the continent with Sir Robert Drury (Letters, pp. 54, 57). In September 1613 Donne had eye trouble (Letters, pp. 280-81, 201, 180). In March 1614 Donne was ill again (Letters, pp. 299, 297; T.M.C., p. 311). In January 1618/19 Donne believed himself to be in a "Consumption" (Lives 54). In March 1625 Donne writes to Sir Robert Ker the effect of "this years debility" upon him, making him incapable of eating with Ker before he preached to King Charles and implying that preaching important sermons was a strain for him (*Letters*, p. 312). Donne was ill again in June 1625 (Harvard MS. 1290; Beal 32). In 1628 Donne refers a number of times to a "falling of the *Uvula*" (214, 217), and in a letter in 1630 he writes to George Garrard of his "frequent fevers" (219).

Donne's illnesses are of biographical interest, but the connections between his actual illnesses and his use of imagery and figurative language associated with illness are of literary interest. Moreover, Donne's frequent references to his own poor health and characteristic use of imagery associated with illness are one more aspect of the Burley letters that connects them with Donne's other prose letters.

In the Burley letters Donne either discusses actual illnesses or uses imagery associated with illness, weakness, or death in *Letters* Nos. 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13, 30, and 32. The discussions of actual illness in the Burley letters use a technique similar to that of a number of Donne's prose letters and other kinds of works such as the *Devotions*. Donne attributes meaning to illness and links it to moral or theological concerns. One example from the *Devotions* illustrates his technique:

> My *God*, my *God*, my *God*, thou mightie *Father*, who hast beene my *Physitian*; Thou glorious *Sonne*, who hast been my *physicke*; Thou blessed *Spirit*, who hast *prepared* and *applied* all to mee, shall I *alone* bee able to overthrow the worke of *all you*, and *relapse* into those *spirituall sicknesses*, from which your infinite *mercies* have withdrawne me? Though thou, O my *God*, have filled my *measure* with *mercie*, yet my *measure* was not so *large*, as that of thy *whole people*, the *Nation*, the *numerous* and *glorious nation of Israel*; and yet how often, how often did they fall into *relapses*? (Raspa 122-23)

In Letter No. 4 (9 in mine) of the Burley letters, Donne writes:

> I am now free from an ague. though I am afrayd
> y^{e} state bee not so; for certaynly the court hath
> in it much vnnaturall heate & y^{e} courts &
> seats of princes are y^{e} harts of all realms w^{ch}

> taking forme from theyre humours are more or lesse conscripted as they confine or enlarge theyre owne wills. (f. 295^{v})

In another letter Donne again uses illness as a metaphor for corruption and morality:

> The Court is not great but full of: ollyty & revells & playes and as merry as if it were not sick.

Later in the same letter, he reports on Essex's actual sickness, links Essex's state of mind and his illness, and goes on to speak of Essex's innocence as being related to his situation:

> he [Essex] withers still in his sicknes & plods on to his end in the same pace where yo^{o} left vs. the worst accidents of his sicknes are y^{t} he conspires wth it & y^{t} is not here [at Court] beleeved. that w^{ch} was sayd of Cato y^{t} his age vnderstood him not I feare may be averted of y^{r} lo: that he vnderstood. not his age: for it is a naturall weaknes of innocency. (B. MS., f. 296^{v})

Donne implies, through his figurative language, that Essex's decline in fortune and his sickness are one and the same and will lead to one end. Donne also implies that Essex's sickness is a weakness like innocence that shows him to be out of step with his times which pray on virtue.

Donne's discussions of illness are not always linked to the state or his spirituall condition. He occasionally indulges in the blasphemous wit of the satires. For example,

> S^{r} if I had remembred y^{t} I should haue wanted y^{r} sight I would not haue beene sick or at least I would not haue beene well by so ill a meanes, as taking phiseck: for I am bound by making my self loose. me thinks now y^{t} y^{ey} err wittyly w^{ch} tech that saints see all mens action in god as in a mirror. (B. MS., f. 294)

Two final examples further illustrate Donne's habitual techniques with the subject of illness. In Burley MS. (f. 303) Donne writes, apparently to the Countess of Bedford:

> The Tyrrany of a suddaine raging sicknes (comfortable in nothing but y^{e} violence of itt) assures y^{t} either itt or I are short liued having found either vertue or stubbernes inough in me to disdaine all bitternes y^{t} itt can make against my body, now assayles my mind & shews me y^{t} (by imprisoning me in my chamber itt is able to depriue me of y^{t} happines w^{ch} by y^{r} grace was allowed me when y^{o} gaue me the prIueledg of having leaue to visit y^{o}. I confesse that this is my sicknes worst fitt & as fearefully ominous as Tamerlins last dayes black ensignes whose threatnings none scaped. Let not y^{r} charity therefore desdayne to coyne wth me, in an honest deceit, to breake this tempest of my sicknes, and since this letter hath my name, and hand, and words, and thoughts bee content to thinke itt me, & to give itt leaue thus to speake to y^{o}, though y^{o} vouchsafe not to speake to itt againe. (Letter No. 61, p. 174)

In a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (*Letters*, pp. 34-37) he writes:

> SIR,
>
> THis letter hath more merit, then one of more diligence, for I wrote it in my bed, and with much pain. I have occasion to sit late some nights in my study, (which your books make a prety library) and now I finde that that room hath a wholesome emblematique use: for having under it a vault, I make that promise me, that I shall die reading, since my book and a grave are so near. But it hath another unwholesomenesse, that by raw vapors rising from thence, (for I can impute it to nothing else) I have contracted a sicknesse which I cannot name nor describe. For it hath so much of a continuall Cramp, that it wrests the sinews, so much of a Tetane, that it withdraws and puls the mouth, and so much of the Gout, (which they whose counsell I use, say it is) that it is not like to be cured, though I am too hasty in three days to pronounce it. If it be the Gout, I am miserable; for that affects dangerous parts, as my neck and brest, and (I think fearfully) my stomach, but it will not kill me yet; I shall be in this world, like a porter in a great house, ever nearest the door, but seldomest abroad: I shall have many things to make me weary, and yet not get leave to be gone. If I go, I will provide by

> my best means that you suffer not for me, in your bonds. The estate which I should leave behinde me of any estimation, is my poor fame, in the memory of my friends, and therefore I would be curious of it, and provide that they repent not to have loved me. Since my imprisonment in my bed, I have made a meditation in verse, which I call a Litany; the word you know imports no other then supplication, but all Churches have one forme of supplication, by that name.

Donne digresses to a discussion of litanies, but returns to the topic of his illness and possible death at the conclusion of this letter. Despite the morbidity and the self-centeredness of his discussion about his illness (a characteristic often found in chronically ill people), Donne attempts to draw some good from his illness. Thus, his imagery having to do with illness is related to his idea of virtue. Donne's linking his illness with his efforts to attain eternal life can appropriately be called metaphysical because Donne attempts to use physical experience to demonstrate something beyond itself and give it a meaning through his religious beliefs.

The Burley Letters

There is no textual evidence for accepting any of the letters in the Burley MSS. as Donne's. None of the letters is available from other sources. The three letters (B. MSS. 11, 14, 32) irrefutably Donne's have been identified on the basis of unmistakable references to his life or work. An examination of the Burley letters, however, shows that a number of them are closely linked among themselves and also contain various links with other Donne works, especially his verse letters, and some other prose letters. Specific letters in the Burley MSS., then, are included or excluded depending upon whether they share common characteristics that are consistent with the characteristics of the three letters in the Burley MSS. irrefutably known to be by Donne. The Burley letters are divided into two groups: the letters that I accept as Donne's, which appear in their chronological position in the text of the letters; and the letters that may have been written by Donne, which appear in Appendix III.

Of the three known Donne letters (Nos. 11, 14, 32), one (14) is a short postscript to Donne's verse letter to Sir Henry Wotton, another (32) is Donne's announcement to Wotton that he has taken orders, and the third (11) is a covering letter sent to Wotton by Donne along with a number of Donne's paradoxes.

Donne's letter in the Burley MSS. on f. 286 is a postscript attached to Donne's verse letter "H.W. in Hiber. Belligeranti" (f. 285^{v}) and should not be treated separately. The two primary subjects of the verse letter are Wotton's failure to write and Donne's desire to maintain Wotton's friendship. The first of these two subjects, the number of letters either received or sent by the writer, occurs in Burley MSS. No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 24, 26, and 27 (Simpson's numbering). The second, expressions of friendship, occurs in letters 3, 5, 6, and 7. Moreover, No. 3, as Simpson points out, contains striking similarities with the verse letter "H.W. in Hiber. Belligeranti," discussing the recipient's experience in Ireland, the debasing nature of Irish life, the number of letters sent and received by the writer, the loss of mutual friends killed in Ireland, and the hope for an unending friendship between the writer and the correspondent. The prose postscript reiterates the wish to maintain a friendship with Wotton that Donne expresses in the verse letter.

Burley MSS. No. 32, Donne's letter to Wotton announcing that he has taken orders (which dates this letter February 1615), is separated from the other Donne letters in the MS. It appears on f. 255; the Donne poems begin on f. 279, and the letters (with the exception of No. 14) on f. 294. Simpson (334) suggests that this letter was copied in a blank space left in the commonplace book, and that the other letters were all written during Wotton's first embassy to Venice (which ended in 1610) or earlier. This letter, like Nos. 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10, professes the writer's friendship for the recipient. It also contains imagery characteristic of Donne. Donne frequently refers to his own weakness and sickness both metaphorically, as in this letter, and literally. The actual illness or weakness of the writer or imagery associated with illness or weakness occurs in Burley Letters No. 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13, 30, and 32.

The final undisputed letter of Donne's in the Burley MSS. is No. 11. In it Donne professes his friendship for Wotton, apologizes for not writing after receiving Wotton's last letter, and although not describing himself as ill or weak, deplores the fact that "alas! no man is more beggerly in actual vertue then I." This letter also contains another type of imagery recurrent in Donne's writing and in the letters in the Burley MSS. that are attributed to Donne: imagery associated with war, fighting, and soldiery. In No. 11 Donne describes his paradoxes as "but swaggerers" "quiet enough if y^{e} resist them." They are "rather alarums to truth to arme her then enemies." These kinds of images also appear in Letters No. 1, 2, 7, 12, 13, 19, 21, and 30, and range from brief references to fortune's assault on the writer to a full-blown metaphor comparing fighting for virtue to the war of the Helvetians.

The numerous connections between the letters are sufficient, in my view, to show that these letters are part of one correspondence. It is logical to assume that there will be a recognizable continuity in a correspondence, and because we have three letters in the group that irrefutably belong to Donne, it is also logical to assume that the other similar letters are also Donne's.

The Burley letters also suggest that there is an extremely close relationship between Donne's prose letters and his verse letters. In fact, the parallels between Donne's prose letter B. MSS. No. 3 (f. 299^{v}) and Donne's "H.W. in Hiber:belligeranti," and between B. MSS. No. 15 and 16 (f. 295 and 296) and the verse letter to the Countess of Bedford "Madame, You have refin'd mee" suggest that Donne probably composed both prose and verse letters at the same time, possibly composing the prose letters first and using them as a draft for the verse letters.

Donne's Treatment of Virtue

A second important aspect of the Burley letters is that they explain the development of Donne's treatment of virtue, a prominent topic in Donne's verse letters to men and women, in the Anniversaries and in the later prose letters, as well as in the Sermons.

References to virtue and related matters (the prevalence of vice in the world, protecting oneself from vice, "discretion," honesty) occur in Letters No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 25, and 30. Donne treats virtue in the Burley letters in the same two ways that we have seen in the verse letters. Burley letters No. 15 (f. 296), 16 (f. 295), and 30 (f. 303) attribute virtue to the recipient of the letter in a way that suggests that the letters were written to the Countess of Bedford and were written around 1608. The other letters (except No. 25) treat virtue as a rarity in what Donne considers to be possibly the wickedest age and country in the history of the world. For example, in Letters No. 4, 7, and 12 Donne compares contemporary English vices with those of other times and places. In Letter No. 4 he describes Livy's complaint that Rome was the wickedest state as that "excellent bias of Livies," and while Donne counters Livy only by claiming that vice in all places and times is much the same, Donne also states that he hopes that England's neighbors are affected by the same vices as England has been so that this time in England will not go down in history as the world's greatest example of vice. In Letter No. 7 Donne describes his times as "y^t height of illness y^t no man dares accuse them bycause everyone contributes much him self to y^t accesse." He goes on to discuss contemporary England's vice from a historical perspective spanning past and future:

> . . . Wee haue a new fashioned valor to suffer any thing rather then misery a new fashiond wisedome to cover imperfections: & envy (w^{ch} not exceeding the limits of emulacion & desire to equall worthy men perchaunce is no fault) is now growne a perfect vice. for heretofore it was but oposed to good fortune & so men might be [thought] to rich now it is oposd to vertue & a man may be to good: If vices bee extremities I wonder how every day such growth & additions: but if wee complayne no otherwise then former ages, that is, if because wee see & feele o^r owne tymes perfectlyest, wee accuse most & that y^e prophesy of Horace Etas parentum prior etc belong also to o^r tymes, it may serve vs for some comfort (though a hard shift) y^t are already borne. and if as those w^{ch} travayle to y^e pole call the english sothernly people so the world shall last to a tyme so wicked y^t o^r age shalbe thought good in respect of that as we do of former ages it is not 600 yeres nor 6000 w^{ch}

> will bring the world to his period or wickednes is to strong & stobborne to be so soone weakened why then should wee much desire lyfe or her delights since we see much ill & feare more.

In Letter No. 12 Donne describes the world much as he does in "A Nocturnall," as "this sickly dotage of ye world where vertue languishes."

One consequence of the general wickedness of the times, Donne implies, is that virtuous men cannot be successful. In Letter No. 3 he describes himself as "one who would rather be honest than fortunate," implying that fortune (success) and honesty are incompatible. In Letter No. 6 Donne, who is at court, describes how he "gleanes" the vices of greater men while Essex and his train are "no more mist here than Angels," again implying that virtue is not compatible with fortune. In Letter No. 9 Donne's defense of Pope Celestine against Dante's sending him to Purgatory for retiring from being Pope is another example of this view of Donne's. Donne asks: "if he [Dante] will needs punish retyrednes thus what hell can his witt devise for ambition? & if white integryty merit this what shall Male or Malum wch Seneca condemns most, deserve?" In Letter No. 21 Donne obliquely refers again to the idea that the virtuous do not succeed: "I always loved innocence better than a pardon: and had rather have true grace than reputed." One final example occurs in Donne's letter to Wotton (No. 11) which accompanies the paradoxes: Donne describes his paradoxes as harmless swaggerers that might appear dangerous only because they were "written in an age where any thing can over throw truth."

A second consequence of the general wickedness of the times is that virtuous men are rare. Letters No. 10, 12, and 19 have to do with the rarity of virtue. In Letter No. 10 Donne describes himself as "a miracle"--"an honest friend at court." In Letter No. 12 Donne writes:

> S^{r}.
> In this sickly dotage of y^{e} world where vertue languisheth
> in a banishment I must be glad shee hath found so holesome a
> dwelling in y^{r} mind y^{t} dares not only harbor her, but avouch
> it by y^{r} words & deeds. for it is as dangerous to haue vertue
> in this world as it wilbe to haue wanted it in the next
> & I am sure to find more sinners in heaven then honest men
> vpon y^{e} earth.

Donne's justification for writing Letter No. 19 (f. 302^{v}) to a man whom he does not know is that he has heard of the man's extraordinary virtue and thus is making an extraordinary effort to meet him.

> They have nothing in charg but to tell y^{o} y^{t} the effect of your
> vertue and worth besydes y^{e} autority of o^{r} forenamed frends
> reports haue made you already knowne vnto me, but y^{t} knowledg
> is as a tast w^{ch} doth rather stir vpp appetite then satisfy
> itt: and y^{t} therefore I do infinitly desire to increase itt by
> o^{r} acquaintance: and for y^{t} purpose (being vnwilling to attend
> so long an occasion as o^{r} meeting) I do this according to the
> fashion of a soldier (w^{ch} occupation for a while I professe)
> charg you with this health. (Letter No. 1, p. 1)

Donne uses the idea that virtuous men are rare to flatter his correspondents, but also to emphasize, through contrast, the general wickedness of the times.

In Donne's verse letters to great ladies he discusses pursuing active good. In the Burley letters, however, Donne's discussions of virtue are defensive. For example, in Letter No. 7, after discussing contemporary England's place in the history of vice, Donne discusses the unfashionableness of virtue and what one must do to protect oneself against vice:

> . . . to bee out of fashion is to bee rude & barbarous &
> to be in fashion is to be dishonest since poverty is dispised
> & hapines envyed? since vertue is not only not worne
> as a compleat royall garment but not as a color [or a]
> or skarfe: no man desiring now to cover his vice wth her shew.
> against these batteries S^{r} y^{o} do well to frame y^{o} an armor

> of y^{t} mettall w^{ch} nature hath infused into y^{o}, & the loue of learning hath hammerd & fashioned: & being so strong against these assaults as y^{o} are why should y^{o} hyde y^{r} self in the Cuntrey when wee worse provided liue here in the Court & citty in continuall battayle & yet I hope keep y^{e} reputacon of honest men.

In stanza 6 of his early verse letter "To Mr Rowland Woodward," Donne begins to develop the ideas about virtues that characterize his later verse letters to great ladies:

> There is no Vertue, but Religion:
> Wise, valiant, sober, just, are names, which none
> Want, which want not Vice-covering discretion.
> (Milgate 20, ll. 16-18)

But in this verse letter, as in the prose letters from the Burley MSS., virtue (Religion) is primarily a form of self-protection. In the rest of the verse letter Donne recommends, "Seeke wee then our selves in our selves":

> So wee, if wee into our selves will turne,
> Blowing our sparkes of vertue, may out burne
> The straw, which doth about our hearts sojourne.
>
> You know, Physitians, when they would infuse
> Into any oyle, the Soule of Simples, use
> Places, where they may lie still warme, to chuse.
>
> So workes retirednesse in us; To rome
> Giddily, and bee every where, but at home,
> Such freedome doth a banishment become.
> (Milgate 20, ll. 22-30)

A more positive view of the world, at least in the Wotton correspondence, first appears in Donne's verse letter "To Sir Henry Wotton, at his going Ambassador to Venice." Donne no longer describes the court as a wicked place; he no longer advocates introspection and retiredness. He describes James as "good and great" and Wotton in his role as the king's ambassador as

> A Taper of his Torch, a copie writ
>   From his Originall, and a faire beame
> Of the same warme, and dazeling Sun, though it
>   Must in another Sphere [Venice] his vertue streame.
>   (Milgate 75, ll. 5-8)

Donne tells Wotton that he does not honor Wotton's good fortune now more than he honored Wotton's honor in adversity. But, in contrast to his earlier letters to Wotton, Donne states that good fortune is more difficult to govern than want because "wee must for others vices care." Furthermore, activity which Donne earlier links with "hot ambition" is the "last Furnace" to forge Wotton's spirits and test his mettle. Donne concludes as an onlooker who wishes Wotton well and who will do all that he can for Wotton--pray for him (a service that is not impaired by Donne's lack of position since all ways to God are equal).

The prose letters from the Burley MSS. written to Wotton considered with Donne's early verse letters show how Donne's ideas about virtue originated and developed. In Donne's verse letter to Wotton "Sir, more then kisses," Donne takes part in a poetical debate on the comparative evils of court, city, and country. The debate, which took place among the wits of Essex's circle in 1597 or early 1598, included poems by Francis Bacon, Henry Wotton, and Thomas Bastard as well as Donne's (see the Commentary of Letter No. 72, p. 215, for a discussion of the debate's antecedents). Donne characteristically avoids being conventional; he condemns all three places and advocates dwelling "in thy selfe." Donne's position in the debate is consistent with his earlier verse letter to Rowland Woodward in which he also recommends turning "into our selves." In the letter to Woodward, Donne explicitly commends "retirednesse" as a way of achieving virtue but only implies that idea in "Sir, more then kisses" when he compares Wotton's self to his home. In both cases the world is a place of vice which threatens, and the best protection for virtue is a defensive response. This attitude is the one expressed in the Burley prose letters written before 1604.

Elizabeth's death, the changes at court with the accession of James, and the gradual success of Donne's friends at court or in other careers made Donne's early view of the world untenable. The verse letter to Wotton marks the beginning of Donne's new approach to virtue as not something to be protected from the world but as a quality depending on action to achieve completion.

Conclusion

No attempt was made to formulate a cohesive thesis about the nature or value of Donne's prose letters. This edition is intended to make available to scholars an accurate text of the letters and to arrange them in chronological order.

Inevitably, however, some new perspectives emerge. The first is how volatile, dangerous, and authoritarian the court of James I was. The second is the importance of Donne's illnesses in influencing his writing, and particularly his "melancholy" preoccupation with suicide. The third is the importance of knowing the chronology of Donne's thought when assessing it. Analyzing Donne's use of imagery in chronological order indicates which images were fundamental to his thought and which were transitory. The chronological arrangement of the letters shows the gradual development of Christian and, more specifically, Anglican thought in Donne's mind. It also indicates that despite Donne's letters about the importance of friendship as an alternative to worldly interests, he regarded it as a poor second to a complete life with social and work interests.

The edition should provide the opportunities particularly for comparisons of Donne's use of imagery in the prose letters over time, and in comparison with other literary works, and for reassessing biographical assertions made about Donne. The emphasis in this edition is to make Donne's prose letters accessible to scholars rather than to interpret them.

TEXTUAL INTRODUCTON

Sources of the Letters

Two hundred and forty-one prose letters have been attributed to John Donne (including his Latin letter to Goodyer). One hundred and fifty-nine of these letters were edited by Donne's son, John Donne the younger, and included in two collections: 129 letters in Donne's Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651) and thirty-three letters in A Collection of Letters Made by S^{r} Tobie Mathews K^{t} (1660). The 1651 Letters were reissued in 1654 using the same sheets with a new title page (Keynes 142). Subsequent references in the text will be to the 1651 edition and will be simply Letters. References in the collation, however, will be only to the date (1651). In every respect except the new title page, the 1654 Letters are identical to the 1651 Letters and should not be considered separately. The Tobie Mathews Collection was printed in 1660 and reprinted in 1692. According to Keynes (152), the 1692 edition is a reissue of the 1660 edition with a new title page inserted after the original title page of 1660. Both collections contain some letters previously published. Twelve of the 1651 Letters were published in editions of Donne's Poems (eight from the 1633 Poems and four from the 1635 Poems); and five of the Donne letters included in the Tobie Mathews Collection were previously published, four in the 1651 Letters and one in the 1654 Cabala (a collection of public letters). Because of this duplication, counting the letters as described here will not yield an accurate total.

A third collection of thirty-two letters in MS. form was discovered in 1907 among the papers of Donne's friend Sir Henry Wotton by Mr. Logan

Pearsall Smith and attributed by him to Donne. Of the remaining letters, eight are found only in printed sources: four first occur in Walton's Life of Herbert (1670); three in Donne's 1633 Poems; and a second letter in the Cabala (1654). One letter now in the British Library remains unpublished. The remaining thirty-nine letters were published by various editors from a variety of manuscripts. Ten of them were first published in John Kempe's edition of The Loseley Manuscripts in 1835. Gosse, in his edition of The Life and Letters of John Donne (1899), printed sixteen letters for the first time from various manuscripts; John Hayward first printed three letters from manuscripts in his 1929 edition of John Donne: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose. Single letters were first published from manuscripts in two nineteenth-century Camden Society publications, edited by S. R. Gardener. One is included in Letters and Other Documents illustrating the Relations between England and Germany at the commencement of the Thirty Years' War, 1868 (No. V, pp. 5-6); and the second is found in The Fortescue Papers (1871, No. CVIII, p. 157). Another letter was published in The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed by Alfred Morrison (second series, 1882-92, Vol. III.D. Printed for Private Circulation, 1896). Other first printings of single letters published from manuscripts include a letter to Lord Ellesmere in Grierson's Donne: Poetical Works (1912, II: 204); a letter to Sir George More edited by M. de Havilland first published in The London Mercury (1925, XIII: 159-60); a letter to Sir Nicholas Carey edited by T. Spencer published by itself in 1930; part of a letter to Lionel Cranfield dated 18 Nov. 1628, published in The Sermons of John Donne (edited by E. M. Simpson and G. R. Potter, Vol. VIII, Berkeley, 1956); and a letter to John Williams dated Aug. 22, 1626, printed in

R. C. Bald's John Donne: A Life (487). Bald also includes a photograph of the holograph (512). In addition to the thirty-nine Donne letters, Bald (Donne and the Drurys) also prints three letters that he considers to have been written by Donne for Sir Robert Drury (two letters) and Lady Drury (one letter). These I include in Appendix II with the letter that Donne wrote for Goodyer.

The Textual History

The accuracy of the texts of the 193 letters available only from printed sources cannot now be verified, although a comparison of letters duplicated in different seventeenth-century publications does suggest that some generalizations can be made about the authority of the various texts. Letters available only from printed sources include 127 of the 129 letters from the 1651 Letters (there is a MS. of one letter available and the facsimile of another MS.), thirty letters from the Tobie Mathews Collection, four letters from Walton's Life of Herbert, three letters from Donne's 1633 Poems, and two letters from the Cabala.

This list oversimplifies the provenance of the letters because some of the letters are found in more than one version in different sources. For example, in the 1633 Poems, eleven prose letters are printed for the first time; eight of these are reprinted in the Letters, while the other three letters occur only in subsequent editions of the Poems. Two prose letters are printed in the Cabala; one of these was reprinted in the Letters; the other occurs nowhere else. To clarify the relationship between the number of letters and their sources, the following table indicates the number of letters first printed in each publication, the total number of letters available in the publication, and the number of letters available from manuscripts (in either Donne's hand or other seventeenth-century hands). The table is followed by a list of the thirty-eight holograph letters available in MS. with their locations and publication histories and then a list of other manuscript sources.

Table 1

Donne's Prose Letters

Title	No. of letters originally published	No. of letters previously published	Total no. of letters in the work	No. of letters from manuscripts
Poems, 1633	11	0	11	0
Poems, 1635	4	11 (from *Poems*, 1633)	15	0
Poems, 1639, 1649, 1650, 1654, 1669, 1719	As in *Poems*, 1635			
LXXX Sermons, 1640	0	1 (from *Poems*, 1635)	1	0
Letters, 1651	117	12 (8 from *Poems*, 1633 4 from *Poems*, 1635)	129	2 (Nos. 5, 7) *(See the preceding page)
Letters, 1654	A reissue of the 1651 *Letters* using the same sheets, but with a cancel title page. (Keynes 142)			
Cabala, 1654	2	0	2	0
Walton's *Life of Donne*, 1658	0	5 (4 from *Letters*, 1651 1 from *Poems*, 1635; *LXXX Sermons*); *Letters*, 1651	5	0

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Donne's Prose Letters

Title	No. of letters originally published	No. of letters previously published	Total no. of letters in the work	No. of letters from manuscripts
Tobie Mathews Collection, 1660	25	5 (4 from *Letters*, 1651; 1 *Cabala*, 1654)	33	0
Tobie Mathews Collection, 1692	A reissue of the 1660 Collection with a new title page inserted after the original. There is no 1670 edition as appears in some bibliographies. (Keynes 148)			
Walton's *Life of Herbert*, 1670	4	0	4	0
Walton's *Lives*, 1670	0	7 (4 from Walton's *Life of Herbert*, 1670; 2 *Letters*, 1651; 1 *Poems*, 1635, *LXXX Sermons*, 1640, *Letters*, 1651, *Walton's Life of Donne*, 1658)	7	
Loseley MSS., 1836 Ed. A. J. Kempe	10	0	11*	11
Donne's Works, 1839 Ed. by Henry Alford (Vol. VI)	0	130	130 (129 from 1651 *Letters* and Donne's Latin letter, 1633) *Poems*	0

* One letter from the Loseley MSS. was not identified as Donne's until the twentieth century. This letter was first printed in *The London Mercury* in 1926 and is included in its chronological place in this table.

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Donne's Prose Letters

Title	No. of letters originally published	No. of letters previously published	Total no. of letters in the work	No. of letters from manuscripts
Camden Society, 1860 Letters and Documents Illustrating the Relation Between England and Germany at the Commencement of the Thirty Years' War	1	0	1	1
Camden Society, 1871 The Fortescue Papers	1	0	1	1
Morrison Collection, 1876	1	0	1	1
Gosse, E. The Life and Letters of John Donne, 1899	19	169	188	19
C. E. Merrill Jr., 1910 (Reprint of 1651 Letters)	0	129	129	0
Evelyn M. Simpson, ed. A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne. Oxford: 1925 [2nd ed. 1948]	32	0	32	32
The London Mercury, 1926. Vol. XIII, pp. 159-60	1	0	1	1
John Hayward, ed. John Donne: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose. London, 1929	3	38	41	3
Letter to Sir. Nic. Carey [Carew] 1930 (ed. T. Spencer)	1	0	1	1

(table continues)

problems of each publication in chronological order in the introduction and discuss more specific questions when treating the individual letters.

The "Poems" of 1633

Eleven of Donne's prose letters (one of which was in Latin) were first published in Donne's *Poems*, 1633. The MSS. for these letters are now lost. These letters were reprinted in all later editions of the *Poems* up to 1719 without significant textual variations. Eight of these prose letters (numbers 4 to 11 of the following list) were included in the *Letters*, again without significant textual variation. They are listed below in the order in which they appear in the 1633 *Poems*, and include the page number from the *Poems*, the page number from the *Letters* for those letters included there, and a portion of the first line of the letter.

1. "*To the Countess* of Bedford." "Madame, I have learned by those laws . . . ," p. 139 [Feb. 1614]
2. [To Sir Robert Ker] "Sir, I Presume you rather try what you can doe in me . . . ," p. 148 [1614?]
3. "HEN. GOODEERE." "Etham vulgari lingua scriptae testantur . . . ," pp. 351-52 [1609/10?]
4. "*To Sir* H. G." "I Send not my Letters as tribute . . . ," pp. 353-55 (*Letters*, pp. 109-12) [1608]
5. "*To Sir H. G*." "SIR, Nature hath made al bodices like . . . ," pp. 356-58 (*Letters*, pp. 96-99) [1607]
6. "*To Sir H. G*." "SIR, This Teusday morning, which hath brought me to London," pp. 359-61 (*Letters*, pp. 85-88) [July 1607]
7. "To Sir H. G." "SIR, In the history or stile of friendship . . . ," pp. 362-63 (*Letters*, pp. 114-16) [Aug. 15, 1607]
8. "*To* S^r H. G." "SIR, It should be no interruption to your pleasures . . . ," pp. 364-66 (*Letters*, pp. 61-64) [1609]

Sources: Beal (243, No. 2); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 2)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.527

Publication History: Loseley MSS. (330-32); Gosse (I: 104-05)

3. To Sir Thomas Egerton, 11 February 1601/2: "To excuse my offence"

Sources: Beal (243, No. 3); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 3)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.528

Publication History: Loseley MSS. (332-33)

4. To Sir George More, 13 February 1601/2: "S^{r}, From Yo^{w}, to whom next to God"

Sources: Beal (243, No. 4); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 4)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.529

Publication History: Loseley MSS. (334-35); Gosse (I: 106-07)

5. To Sir Thomas Egerton, 13 February 1601/2: "Only in that coyne"

Sources: Beal (243, No. 5); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 5)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.530

Publication History: Loseley MSS. (336); Gosse (I: 107-08)

6. To Sir Thomas Egerton, [13 February 1601/2]: "The honorable favor that"

Sources: Beal (243, No. 6); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 6)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.534

Publication History: Loseley MSS. (343-44)

7. To Sir Robert Cotton, 20 February 1601/2: "Sir, I send you back"

Sources: Beal (243, No. 7); Keynes (155, Item 67, No. 1)

Location: BM, Cotton MS. Julius C. III, f. 153

Publication History: Gosse (I: 109); BM facsimile postcard (MSS 108)

8. To Sir George More, March 1601/2: "If I could fear y^{t}"
   Sources: Beal (243, No. 8); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 7)
   Location: Folger, MS. L. b.532
   Publication History: *Loseley MSS*. (339-40); Gosse (I: 112-14)
9. To Sir Thomas Egerton, 1 March 1601/2: "That offence w^{ch} was to God"
   Sources: Beal (243, No. 9); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 8)
   Location: Folger, MS. L. b.533
   Publication History: *Loseley MSS*. (341-43); Gosse (I: 114-15)
10. To Sir Robert Cotton, [1602?]: "SIR, I have read Valdesius"
    Sources: Beal (243, No. 10); Keynes (155-56, Item 67, No. 4)
    Location: British Library, Cotton MS. Cleopatra F. VII, f. 293
    Publication History: Gosse (I: 123-25); Facsimiles in *Facsimiles of Royal, Historical, and Literary Autographs in the British Museum* (1899), plate 93, and Petti, *English Literary Hands*, No. 44
11. [To Sir Robert Cotton], 24 January [1609/10]: "James goes to Roysham"
    Sources: Beal (243, No. 11); Keynes (155, Item 67, No. 2)
    Location: British Library, Cotton MS. Julius C. III, f. 154
    Publication History: Facsimile in Gosse (I: facing 108)
12. To Henry, Prince of Wales, [1610]: "Next to that boldness"
    Sources: Beal (243, No. 12); Keynes (158, Item 68c, No. 1)
    Location: Owned by the Marquess of Bath, Longleat House, Portland Papers, Vol. I, f. 211 [originally accompanying a presentation copy of *Pseudo-Martyr* (London, 1610)]
    Publication History: Hayward (462-63)

13. To Sir Thomas Egerton, [1610]: "As Ryvers though in there Course"
Sources: Beal (243, No. 13); Keynes (159, Item 68e)
Location: Owned by Robert S. Pirie, Hamilton, Massachusetts [accompanying a presentation of exemplum of Pseudo-Martyr (London, 1610)]
Publication History: Grierson (II: 204). Facsimile in Sotheby's sale catalogue, 19 March 1951, Lot 109

14. [To a brother of Mrs. Anne Donne], 7 February 1611/12: "Sir, This is my second letter"
Sources: Beal (244, No. 14); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 5)
Location: Folger, MS. L. b.535
Publication History: Gosse (I: 287-89)

15. To Sir Robert Harley, 7 April 1613: "I could almost be content"
Sources: Beal (244, No. 15); Keynes (158, Item 68c, No. 2)
Location: British Library, Loan MS. 29/202, f. 131
Publication History: Hayward (464-65)

16. To Sir Robert More, 10 August 1614: "Sir, Our predecessors were never so conquered"
Sources: Beal (244, No. 16); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 9)
Location: Folger, MS. L. b.537
Publication History: Gosse (II: 46-47)

17. To Sir Robert More, 10 August 1614: "S^{r}, Since I had no other things"
Sources: Beal (244, No. 17); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 9)
Location: Folger, MS. L. b.539
Publication History: Gosse (II: 47-48)

18. To William Trumbull, 10 September 1614: "______________"*

Source: Beal (244, No. 18)

Location: This letter is located by Beal in the Berkshire Record but was subsequently moved to the British Library, Vol. VI, No. 96, Trumbull Misc. MSS.

Publication History: Unpublished

19. [To Sir George or Sir Robert More], 3 December 1614: "SIR, I returned not till yesternight"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 18); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 10)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.538

Publication History: Gosse (II: 60-61)

Note: Internal evidence suggests the letter was written to Sir George More.

20. To Sir Edward Herbert, 23 January 1614/15: "Sir, Because since I had the honor to see you"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 19); Keynes (158, Item 68c, No. 3)

Location: Public Record Office, PRO 30/53/7/8, f. 15

Publication History: Hayward (465-66)

21. To Sir Edward Herbert, [April 1619]: "To the Noblest knight S^r Edward Herbert. S^r I make account that thys Booke"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 21); Sullivan (113)

Location: Bodleian [accompanying a presentation of a MS. of _Biathanatos_ in Bodleian, MS. e Mus. 131

Publication History: _Letters_ No. 7 (p. 20); Gosse (II: 125); Simpson (161-62); Sullivan (124-25)

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* This letter begins with a long dash.

22. To Sir Dudley Carleton, 31 August 1619: "I present to your Lordship here a hand"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 22); Keynes (155, Item 65)

Location: Public Record Office, SP. 84/91/219

Publication History: Camden Society, 1868, Letters and Documents Illustrating the Relations between England and Germany at the commencement of the Thirty Years' War (No. V, pp. 5-6); Gosse (II: 133-34)

23. To George Villiers, Marquess of Buckingham, 8 August 1621: "May it please your Lordship"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 23); Keynes (155, Item 66)

Location: Bodleian, MS. Add. D. 111, ff. (133-34)

Publication History: Camden Society, 1871, The Fortescue Papers, (Letter No. CVIII, 157-58); Gosse (II: 140)

24. To Sir Henry Marten, 9 May 1622: "SIR, I waited upon you heretofore"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 24); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 11)

Location: Harvard, fMS Eng 930

Publication History: Gosse (II: 156)

25. To Sir Thomas Roe, 1 December 1622: "If your Lordship's chaplain"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 25); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 12)

Location: Public Record Office, SP. 14/134/59

Publication History: Gosse (II: 173-75)

26. To George Villiers, Marquess of Buckingham, [1623]: "Most Honoured Lord, I can thus far make myself beleive"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 26); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 13)

Location: Bodleian, MS. Tanner 73, f. 2 (Beal's reference to MS. Tanner 83 fol. 305 is incorrect)

Publication History: Gosse (II: 176-77)

27. To Sir Nicholas Carew, 23 July 1624: "

Sources: Beal (244, No. 27); Keynes (155, Item 66a)

Location: Cited in Beal as Pforzheimer Library, MS. 130; subsequently moved to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Austin, Texas.

Publication History: Morrison Collection (1896, Vol. III D.: 128); The Carl H. Pforzheimer Library: English Literature, 1475-1700 (New York, 1940, III: 1255-56

28. To Sir Nicholas Carew, 1 September 1624: "SIR, It must always be my first work"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 28); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 15)

Location: British Library, Add. MS. 29598, f. 13

Publication History: Gosse (II: 209). Facsimile in Greg, English Literary Autographs, plate XLVIII(c)

29. To Sir Nicholas Carew, 17 September [1624]: "SIR, I have worn out my horses in your progress"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 29); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 16)

Location: British Library, Add. MS. 29598, f. 15

Publication History: Gosse (II: 209-10); Facsimile in Keynes (Bibliography, 1958, facing 123)

30. To Bridget White, Lady Kingsmill, 26 October 1624: "Madame, Those things which God dissolves at once"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 30); Keynes (137, Item 55, No. 5)

Location: Unlocated; sold by Maggs, catalogue No. 730 (1943), item 381

Publication History: Letters (p. 7); Walton, 1658, no. 5; Tobie Mathews Collection, No. 4; Gosse (II: 210). Facsimiles in Maggs catalogues Nos. 597 (1934), item 353; 600 (1934), item 93; and 611 (1935), item 614 (British Library)

31. To Sir Edward Conway, 7 December 1624: "May it please your Honour, I received by the hands of Mr. Woodward"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 31); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 17)

Location: Public Records Office, SP. 14/176/28

Publication History: Gosse (II: 213-14)

32. To Sir Nicholas Carew, 21 June 1625: "

Sources: Beal (244, No. 32); Keynes (158, Item 68d)

Location: Harvard, MS. Eng 1290

Publication History: Printed by Charles River, Massachusetts, 1930 (ed. T. Spencer)

33. To Sir Henry Wotton, 12 July 1625: "Thys ys y^r quietus est from me"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 33); Keynes (154, Item 63, No. 10)

Location: Folger, MS. L. b.540

Publication History: Loseley MSS. (345-47, with facsimile of subscription, p. 327); Hayward (485-86)

34. [To Sir Thomas Roe], 25 November 1625: "Our blessed Saviour establish in you"

Sources: Beal (244, No. 34); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 18)

Location: Public Record Office, SP. 16/10/28

Publication History: Gosse (II: 222-25)

35. To Sir Nicholas Carew, 26 June 1626: "SIR, Upon the many testimo[nies] I have had"

    Sources: Beal (244, No. 35); Keynes (156, Item 67, No. 19)

    Location: Huntington, HM 7281 (Keynes' reference to HM 2781 is incorrect)

    Publication History: Gosse (II: 232-33)

36. To John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, 22 August 1626: "My very good L: Thys poore Man, Mr. Holney"

    Sources: Beal (244 No. 36); Keynes (159, Item 68f)

    Location: Lincolnshire Archives Office, LT. & D. 1626/11

    Publication History: Bald (487); facsimile in Bald (facing 567)

37. To Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, 18 November 1628: "

    Sources: Beal (244, No. 37); Keynes (159, Item 68g)

    Location: Kent Archives Office, U 269/1 Cranfield miscellaneous correspondence 1625-41, D

    Publication History: Printed in part in Potter and Simpson (VIII: 24-25)

38. To Sir George More, 22 June 1629: "The busines of thys churche"

    Sources: Beal (244, No. 38); Keynes (158)

    Location: Folger, MS. L. b.542

    Publication History: Printed in M. de Havilland (159-62)

Letters in Other Seventeenth-Century Hands

1. Extracts from Donne's letters in a mid-seventeenth-century miscellany

    Source: Beal (244)

Location: Folger, MS. V. a. 263 [seven unnumbered pages]

Publication History: Unpublished

2. "Anderdon MSS.": Copies of five letters on two folio leaves once conjugate owned by J. H. Anderdon before 1879.

   Source: Beal (244)

   Location: The leaf with the letters printed in Gosse I: 309 and II: 33-34 is owned by Roger Barrett, Chicago. The leaf with the letters printed in Gosse I: 109-10; II: 16-17; and II: 206 is in the Donne file in safe, Library, St. Paul's Cathedral.

   Publication History: All five letters printed only in Gosse.

3. The Burley MSS.: Thirty-two letters attributed to Donne in several hands.

   Source: Beal (244.)

   Location: Leicestershire Record Office DG.7/Lit. 2

   Publication History: Printed in Simpson (Prose Works 303-34). Three letters were reprinted in Gardner and Healy (Selected Prose 108-11).

4. O'Flahertie MS.: A single letter.

   Source: Beal (252)

   Location: Harvard, MS. Eng 966.5

   Publication History: Printed in Letters 1651, pp. 24-26. An emended version partly based on the O'Flahertie MS. is printed in Gosse (II: 123-24).

Beyond the difficulty caused by having to deal with those letters available only from printed sources, each publication contains its own editorial problems. I will briefly deal with the general editorial problems of each publication in chronological order in the introduction and discuss more specific questions when treating the individual letters.

The "Poems" of 1633

Eleven of Donne's prose letters (one of which was in Latin) were first published in Donne's *Poems*, 1633. The MSS. for these letters are now lost. These letters were reprinted in all later editions of the *Poems* up to 1719 without significant textual variations. Eight of these prose letters (numbers 4 to 11 of the following list) were included in the *Letters*, again without significant textual variation. They are listed below in the order in which they appear in the 1633 *Poems*, and include the page number from the *Poems*, the page number from the *Letters* for those letters included there, and a portion of the first line of the letter.

1. "*To the Countess* of Bedford." "Madame, I have learned by those laws . . . ," p. 139 [Feb. 1614]

2. [To Sir Robert Karre] "Sir, I Presume you rather try what you can doe in me . . . ," p. 148 [1614?]

3. "HEN. GOODEERE." "Etham vulgari lingua scriptae testantur . . . ," pp. 351-52 [1609/10?]

4. "*To Sir* H. G." "I Send not my Letters as tribute . . . ," pp. 353-55 (*Letters*, pp. 109-12) [1608]

5. "*To Sir H. G*." "SIR, Nature hath made al bodices like . . . ," pp. 356-58 (*Letters*, pp. 96-99) [1607]

6. "*To Sir H. G*." "SIR, This Teusday morning, which hath brought me to London," pp. 359-61 (*Letters*, pp. 85-88) [July 1607]

7. "To Sir H. G." "SIR, In the history or stile of friendship . . . ," pp. 362-63 (*Letters*, pp. 114-16) [Aug. 15, 1607]

8. "*To* S^{r} H. G." "SIR, It should be no interruption to your pleasures . . . ," pp. 364-66 (*Letters*, pp. 61-64) [1609]

9. "To the Countesse of Bedford." "Happiest and worthyest Lady, I Do not remember that I have seen a petition in verse . . . ," p. 367 (Letters, p. 67) [1609]

10. "To S^r H. G." "SIR, Because I am in a place and season . . . ," pp. 368-69 (Letters, pp. 78-80) [Spring 1608]

11. "To Sir H. G." "SIR, I Hope you are now welcome to London . . . ," pp. 370-72 (Letters, pp. 70-73) [Mar. 1608]

Roger Bennett ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 126) states that "what evidence there is" indicates that the editor or the printer of the Letters used the 1633 Poems as the source for the eight letters printed there and that "no editor after 1633 consulted the manuscripts of the letters." Grierson (II: xc) conjectures that a commonplace-book of Sir Henry Goodyer provided "the nucleus" of the text of the shorter poems as well as the text of the prose letters of the 1633 Poems. He bases his conjecture on a reference by Donne to "that old book" of Goodyer's and the example of Donne's friend Sir Henry Wotton's collection of letters and poems:

> When in 1614 Donne contemplated an edition of his poems he wrote to Goodyere: 'By this occasion I am made a Rhapsoder of mine own rags, and that cost me more diligence to seek them, than it did to make them. This made me aske to borrow that old book of you,' &c. Letters. (xci)

Grierson notes that Wotton's commonplace-book includes various famous public letters such as Sidney's letter to Queen Elizabeth on the Anjou marriage and other letters which recur in commonplace-books of the period, as well as "poems and letters sent to Wotton by his friends, including Donne" (xci). These items were transcribed by Wotton's secretaries:

> The letters [in Wotton's book] have no signatures appended which is the case with the letters in the 1633 edition of Donne's poems. Wotton and Goodyere did not need to be reminded of the authors, and perhaps did not wish others to know. The reason then for the rather odd inclusion of nine prose letters

> in a collection of poems is probably, that the principal manuscript used by the printer was an 'old book' which had belonged to Sir Henry Goodyere and in which his secretaries had transcribed poems and letters by Donne. (xci)

Grierson suggests that the text of the commonplace-book "would be accurate, allowing for the carelessness, indifference, and misunderstandings of secretaries and copyists" (xci).

Bennett disagrees with Grierson's theory:

> That the letters came from Goodere's papers is the only reasonable conjecture, but that these eight had been copied into a commonplace book is not a necessary inference from the fact that they were printed in the Poems. Professor Grierson ignored the importance attached to Donne's letters as examples of epistolary elegance when he spoke of the "rather odd inclusion" of these "prose letters in a collection of poems." It is quite possible that they were printed in 1633 for no other reason than that the editor had asked for and got the originals from one of Sir Henry Goodere's heirs (probably Sir Francis Nethersole). It is, indeed, somewhat likely that all of the Goodere letters printed in 1651 were in the possession of the editor of the first edition of the poems, and that from him they passed, by way of the publisher, to the younger Donne. The 1633 edition of the poems was published by John Marriot, whose son and partner, Richard, published Letters to Severall Persons. His father did not formally sign over his rights to Donne's letters and poems until May 3, 1651, however. When he did so he listed "Packetts of letters." It is a safe conjecture that the Goodere letters, and possibly some of the Garrard letters, had been in the possession of the Marriots for a number of years. ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 126-27)

The views of both Grierson and Bennett are that the texts of these letters are probably reasonably reliable. As both point out, such views are necessarily conjectural.

The "Poems" of 1635

Four new letters were added to the 1635 Poems which appear in all later editions of the Poems up to 1719 without important textual variations. These letters were also added to the Letters. Of the four letters added to the 1635 Poems, three were written to George Garrard and the fourth to "Lady G," either Martha Garrard or "some Lady of Garrard's acquaintance."

1. To my honoured friend G. G. Esquire. Paris the 14th of Aprill, here, 1612: "Neither your Letters, nor silence, needs excuse . . ." (Letter 85, Letters, pp. 237-39)
2. To my honoured friend G. G. Esquire. [Aubry Hatch, 2 November 1630]: "I Should not only send you an account by my servant . . ." (Letter 86, Letters, pp. 240-41)
3. [To George Garrard] [7 January 1630]: "SIR, This advantage you, and my other friends have, by my frequent Fevers . . ." (Letter 87, Letters, pp. 241-44)
4. To the Lady G.: "I Am not come out of England, if I remain in the Noblest part of it, your minde . . ." (Letter 88, Letters, pp. 244-45)

The third of these letters, "To George Garrard. (7 January 1630)," was also reprinted (with some passages omitted) in Donne's LXXX Sermons published in 1640.

Bennett ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 126-27) has shown that the texts of three of these four letters printed in the Letters "differ markedly" from the 1635 Poems. The text of the first of these, Letter 85, closely follows the text of the letter in the 1635 Poems. However, the body of these two letters is repeated in the Letters as Letter 92, but with a different beginning and conclusion and no heading or date. The second of the letters included in the Poems is reprinted in the Letters as Letter 86. Bennett believes that the version in the 1635 Poems is a shortened version of Letter 86 made by omitting the original conclusion and adding an abridged conclusion from Letter 110 of the Letters. The third letter, No. 87, Bennett argues,

> furnishes further evidence of the corruption of the 1635 text of these Garrard letters. In 1651 it includes thanks to Garrard for remembering Donne's son, George, then prisoner in Spain, a reference to Lord Percy, an allusion to an obscure business about a lady whose diamond Donne had, and several lines about his plans for his sermons at Christmas, Candlemas, and Lent. George Donne's troubles and the "Diamond Lady" are mentioned in other of Donne's letters to Garrard [Nos. 107, 110], and there can be little doubt of the genuineness of these details in the 1651 text of No. 87; but the 1635 text omits them altogether. Moreover, the passage about the sermons Donne should have preached, which occurs only in the 1651 text, was written before Christmas, but the letter is dated "Ianuary 7, 1630" in the 1635 text. (Donne's Letters to Severall Persons 128)

The fourth prose letter added to the 1635 Poems is No. 88 of the Letters to "Lady G." Bennett does not discuss this letter, but David Novarr does in his The Making of Walton's Lives. Novarr shows that the editorial changes made to this letter have the same purpose as those made to the other three letters: they all promote the image of Donne as a single-minded divine. In this letter, for example, the daring lines that appear in the 1651 Letters, "I am by continuall medi / tation so learned, that your own good An / gell, when it would do you most good, / might be content to come and take in / structions from / Your humble and affectionate servant / J. Donne." become the more conventional "I am by continuall meditation so learned, that any creature (except your owne good Angell) might be content to come and take instructions from Your humble and affectionate servant / I.D." (Poems, 1635). David Novarr in The Making of Walton's Lives takes Bennett's analysis several steps further. Novarr suggests that Isaac Walton assisted in the organization of the 1635 edition of Donne's Poems and that Walton chose and edited these letters to promote his vision of Donne as an exemplary divine.

Novarr points out that a number of minor editorial changes in the texts of the four letters added to the 1635 Poems are similar to the kinds of changes Walton makes in the Donne letters quoted in the Lives. Among those kinds of changes are Walton's habit of specifically dating letters to suggest verisimilitude and his simplifying of some passages to ensure that his readers understand them. The major editorial changes to these letters are the exclusion of passages dealing with Donne's secular life and the altering of aspects of the letters that qualify Donne's devotion to the Church. These changes are also the kinds of changes that Walton makes to the Donne letters that he quotes. As Novarr further shows, Walton's revisions to his text in successive editions of the Lives progressively move toward the portrait of Donne as a single-minded religious figure.

I accept Bennett's and Novarr's analysis of the four letters that were first printed in the 1635 Poems, and therefore use the 1651 Letters as my copy text for these four letters. These are the only letters where the earliest printed version is not used for my text. The textual variants of these four letters are discussed in detail in the commentary for each letter.

"Letters to Severall Persons of Honour," 1651

One hundred and twenty-nine letters were printed in Donne's Letters. Of these, one hundred and seventeen were printed for the first time; the other twelve, as we have seen, were first printed elsewhere. Of the one hundred and seventeen first printed in the Letters, one (Letter 98, pp. 267-69) has been shown not to be Donne's, but to be a letter from Sir

Henry Goodyer to the Earl of Salisbury, 1609 (Keynes 140n). This letter, included in Appendix I, has been shown to have been drafted by Donne for Sir Henry Goodyer (see Johnson 38-39).

Bennett formulated a working hypothesis about the editorial methods used by the younger Donne in the Letters by "first discovering what the most probable sources of the letters were, and second by examining the motives and methods which governed their arrangement and the headings which were given to them" ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 120). Bennett's view is that the younger Donne was anxious to please and impress two patronesses: Mrs. Bridget Dunch and Mrs. Bridget White (later Lady Kingsmill) ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 133-34). Both were related to the Sir Thomas Lucy who was Donne's friend. Mrs. Bridget Dunch was a very wealthy niece of Sir Thomas Lucy whose husband, Edmund Dunch of Little Wittenham in Berkshire, was well regarded by Oliver Cromwell. Lady Kingsmill's husband's cousin, Constance, was the second wife of the elder Sir Thomas Lucy. Lady Kingsmill was also apparently wealthy and a patroness of literary men from the time of Donne's letters to her in 1610 before her marriage at least until the 1650's when Donne's son sent her a copy of Biathanatos. She lived until 1672. To please these ladies, Donne's son dedicated the Letters to Mrs. Bridget Dunch and placed five letters which his father had written to Bridget White (Lady Kingsmill) at the beginning of the collection. He also arranged and changed the letters available to him to include some letters to Sir Thomas Lucy, to increase the number of correspondents, and to increase the number of "persons of honour" addressed, that is, people who were still regarded as important in 1651. While Bennett is certainly correct about the younger Donne's wishes to please his patronesses, he might be overestimating the importance of the social position of Donne's correspondents in the younger Donne's editorial practices. While Donne's son was probably concerned to show that his father had close connections with many of the most important figures of James's reign, the social status of most of those figures when the younger Donne was compiling the 1651 Letters was no better than Sir Henry Goodyer's. The Earl of Carlisle, for example, was in exile and impoverished; Sir Robert Ker (Earl of Somerset) was dead and in disgrace; and Buckingham had been assassinated in 1628. Few of Donne's powerful friends did well after the death of James, and they fared even worse after the revolution. Thus, the main editorial motive may simply have been to provide a greater variety of correspondents.

I. A. Shapiro, in "The Text of Donne's Letters to Severall Persons," was the first to examine the reliability of the text of the Letters. Shapiro identified seven letters addressed to other recipients in the Letters as having been written to Sir Henry Goodyer. Bennett agrees with Shapiro's identification of the letters to Goodyer with one exception, Letter No. 92 (see p. lxvii).

Bennett carried Shapiro's initial work much further and discovered that 104 of the 129 letters were written to three correspondents or people close enough to these correspondents that the correspondent could possess a copy of the letter ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 121). Sixty-seven letters have been shown by Bennett and others to have been written to Sir Henry Goodyer. Copies of two more letters written to the Countess of Bedford were possibly among Goodyer's papers. Twenty-eight letters are to Sir Robert Ker, and two letters were written to his "Kinsman and friend, the Royal favorite, Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester and Earl of Somerset to whom Donne sent letters through Ker." Twenty letters are to George Garrard; two were written to his sister, Martha, and one ("To Lady G") is either to her or to some great lady Donne is addressing through Garrard. These three groups of letters along with the small group of five letters addressed to Bridget White comprise 120 of the 129 letters. Bennett concludes that the younger Donne had access to the correspondence of only three of Donne's friends and not to a comprehensive letter book preserved by John Donne. Bennett assigns six of the nine remaining letters to Goodyer based on his belief that unless there is some evidence to the contrary, the letter was likely written to Goodyer (Donne's "Letters to Severall Persons" 137). The three remaining letters, Nos. 7, 10, and 129, were written to Sir Edward Herbert, the Countess of Montgomery, and Mrs. Cokayne, respectively. The first two, as Bennett says, are "virtually dedications"; the letter to Sir Edward Herbert accompanied a copy of Biathanatos and the letter to the Countess of Montgomery accompanied a sermon. Bennett suggests that because of the nature of the letters Donne would have been likely to keep copies of them, that the younger Donne inherited those copies, and that the letters were printed from them. The letter to Mrs. Cokayne was one of six letters to her which Donne's son had in his possession. The other five were later included in the Tobie Mathews Collection, 1660. Bennett suggests that perhaps the younger Donne did not receive Mrs. Cokayne's letters until he was ready to end the book.

Bennett summarizes the younger Donne's editing of the letters as follows:

> When the process of editing the volume of 1651 was begun there were available (1) a large number of letters to Sir Henry Goodere as well as a few copies of letters to others which had

> been in Goodere's possession, (2) a few letters to George Garrard, (3) a very few copies of important letters which Donne had saved, (4) five letters to Lady Bridget Kingsmill, and (5) the letters which had been printed with the Poems. After much editing had been done, more Garrard letters, and a considerable number which had been in the possession of Sir Robert Ker, Earl of Ancrum, became available, as well as six letters to Mrs. Cokain, only one of which was used.
>
> An effort was made to arrange these letters and to fabricate headings for them so that they would appear to be addressed to a greater variety of correspondents and to people of more importance. ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 139)

Bennett's analysis of the Letters of 1651 thus led him to summarize the contents as follows:

> Nos. 1-5 Kingsmill, 6 Goodere, 7 Donne's copy of a letter to Sir Edward Herbert; 8 Ker, perhaps Donne's copy; 9 To Lady Bedford, probably Goodere's copy; 10 Donne's copy of a letter to the Countess of Montgomery; 11-12 Goodere; 13-15 George and Martha Garrard; 16-20 Goodere; 21-38 Goodere, alternately derived from the Poems, and from MSS., and including one from Goodere's copy of a letter to Lady Bedford; 39-84 Goodere; 85-89 Garrard, and his copy of a letter to a lady; 90 Ker; 91-97 George and Martha Garrard; 98-105 Ker, including his copy of one to Viscount Rochester; 106-110 Garrard; 111-128 Ker, including his copy of one to Viscount Rochester; 129 Mrs. Cokayne. ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 140)

Bennett suggests that "thirty-seven headings should be corrected or supplied" ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 140). The following table lists the correspondent named in the letters as they appear in 1651, I. A. Shapiro's corrections, and Bennett's corrections:

Donne's Letters to Severall Persons of Honour:

Bennett's Groups

(References in brackets are to Bennett's "Donne's Letters to Severall Persons of Honour" 120-40.)

I. Letters to Sir Henry Goodere (Goodyer)

Letters - headed to him in 1651 (120-21, note 3):
12, 17-21, 24-25, 27-30, 33-34, 36, 38-39, 42, 46-49, 51-52, 54-58, 63-65, 68-69, 71, 75-78, 80-81, 83-84 43

Letters assigned by I. A. Shapiro to Goodere and accepted by Bennett (121, note 3):
26, 41, 44, 59-60, 61, 66 7

Letters assigned to Goodere by Bennett (121, note 3):
6, 31, 32, 62, 79, 74, 40, 73, 11, 45, 43, 37, 35, 22, 50 15

Letters to Goodere rejected by Bennett:
98 (headed to Goodere in 1651). Bennett identifies the recipient as the Earl of Somerset (121, note 3). The letter was actually from Goodere to the Earl of Salisbury (Keynes 140, note 1).
92 assigned to Goodere by Shapiro. Bennett (128) assigns it to George Garrard.

Total 65

Two letters to the Countess of Bedford are grouped by Bennett with the Goodere letters (120):
9, 23 2

Total 67

II. Letters to Sir Robert Ker (Karre)

Letters headed to him in 1651 (121, note 4):
8, 90, 99-105, 111, 113, 115-120, 122-128 24

Letters assigned to Ker by Bennett:
114, 121 2

Two letters to Sir Robert Carr are grouped by Bennett with the Ker letters (132):
98, 112 2

Total 28

III. Letters to George Garrard

Letters headed to him in 1651 (121, note 6):
13-14, 85-86, 93-94, 96, 106-110

Number 87 headed to Garrard in Poems of 1635

Number 95 includes a direct address to Garrard in the text of the letter 14

Letters assigned by Bennett (121, note 6):
89, 91, 92 3

Letters headed to Martha Garrard and "Lady G." in *Letters* grouped by Bennett (121, notes 7 and 8) with the Garrard letters:
15, 97 to Martha Garrard
88 to Lady G. 3

Total 20

Cumulative Total 115

IV. *Letters Headed to Lady Kingsmill in 1651*

1-5 5

V. *Nine Remaining Letters*

For three of the nine remaining letters Bennett accepts the headings of 1651:
7 To Sir Edward Herbert
10 To the Countess of Montgomery
129 To Mrs. Cokayne

The remaining six letters Bennett assigns to Sir Henry Goodere (136-37):
53 "*To Sʳ* T. H."
60 "*To Sir* G. B."
67 "*To Sir* G. B."
70 "*To Sir* T. R."
72 "*To my good friend* G. H." 9

TOTAL 129

In addition to Shapiro's and Bennett's analyses, Ernest W. Sullivan II has shown that even when a holograph was available to the younger Donne, the text he produced is unlikely to be reliable by current standards. Sullivan shows that the younger Donne probably had access to the holograph of letter number 7 of the 1651 *Letters*, "To the Noblest Knight Sʳ. Edward Herbert *L. of Cherbury; sent to him with his Book* Biathanatos." Sullivan compares the text of the 1651 *Letters* with the holograph finding:

> Donne's son predictably expanded the letter's heading to remind readers that Sir Edward Herbert had been promoted to "L. of Cherbury" as well as changing the spelling, punctuation, or capitalization affecting eighty of the one hundred and seventy-two words in the letter. (119)

However, Sullivan's comment must be put into perspective. Edmund Gosse also transcribed this letter from the MS. and changed the spelling, punctuation, or capitalization of 90 of the 172 words in the letter. Both editors' changes are, with few exceptions, modernizations of punctuation and spelling. Letter No. 197, which was printed in the 1651 *Letters* as well as in the *Tobie Mathew Collection* and Walton's *Life of Donne*, is partly available in holograph. The text of the holograph suggests that the 1651 *Letters* are more reliable than are the other seventeenth-century texts, with the exception of the text of the letters in the 1633 *Poems* (see the Textual Notes for Letter No. 197).

A second issue of the 1651 *Letters* was printed in 1654, using the same sheets as 1651 with a cancel title page.

"Cabala," "Mysteries of State," in Letters of the Great Ministers of King James and King Charles, 1654

Two letters to Buckingham were printed in the *Cabala*, 1654. The *Cabala* is the only source for the letter from "*Dr*. Donne *to the Marquesse of* Buckingham, 13th. Septemb. 1621." "*My most honoured Lord*, I most humbly beseech your Lordship to afford this rag of paper a room amongst your evidences." The second letter, "*Dr*. Donne *to the Duke*": "My Honoured Lord, Once I adventured to say to the Prince his Highnesse, That I was sure he would receive a book from me . . . ," also appears as Letter No. 9 of the *Tobie Mathews Collection*, with several phrases omitted and one phrase added. The version in the Tobie Mathews Collection is a slightly condensed version of the Cabala text, with variations in punctuation, spelling, and some words. The popularity of the Cabala led to a supplement, Scrinia Sacra; Secrets of Empire, in Letters of Illustrious Persons. A Supplement of the Cabala, being published within a few months. Both were reissued in 1654 in a single large folio, Cabala: sive Scrinia Sacra. In 1663 Scrinia Ceciliania: Mysteries of State and Government: In letters of the late famous Lord Burghley, and other Ministers of State . . . Being a further additional supplement of the Cabala was published, and in 1691 it was combined with the folio version in Cabala, sive Scrinia Sacra . . . To which is added in this third edition, a second part, consisting of a choice collection of original letters and negotiations, never before published. The new letters and negotiations consist of Leicester's campaign in the Netherlands (Feil 267).

"Life of Donne," 1658

Five of Donne's letters were published in Walton's Life of Donne, 1658, none for the first time. The letters with their previous printings are as follows:

1. p. 100: [To George Garrard, 7 January 1630]: "SIR, This advantage you, and my other friends have, by my frequent Fevers . . . ." This letter was first published in the 1635 Poems (p. 288), followed by LXXX Sermons, 1640, and Letters No. 87 (p. 241).
2. p. 122: To all my friends: Sir H. Goodere [1612]: "SIR, I am not weary of writing. . . ." Letters No. 17 (p. 42)

3. p. 128: To Sir H. Goodere [7 September 1608]: "SIR, EVery tuesday I make account that I turn a great hour-glas. . . ."
   Letters No. 18 (p. 48)

4. p. 134: To Sir H. Goodere [1608?]: "SIR, This letter hath more merit, then one of more diligence. . . ."
   Letters No. 12 (p. 31)

5. p. 141: To the Hon^{ble} Lady, the Lady Kingsmel, upon the death of her husband. At my poor house at S. Pauls. 26 Octob. 1624.
   Letters No. 5 (p. 7)

R. E. Bennett states that when "Walton, in 1658, reprinted several of Donne's letters, he was remarkably faithful to the text of 1651, even in some cases to the extent of reproducing typographical peculiarities" ("Walton's Use" 31). Bennett does not specify what these peculiarities are, but presumably they are the blank lines representing crossed-out passages found in the two letters to Sir H. Goodere: first, "SIR, I am not weary of Writing . . ." (*Life of Donne* 122; *Letters* No. 17, p. 42); and second, to Sir H. Goodere, "SIR, This letter hath more merit than one of more diligence . . ." (*Life of Donne* 134; *Letters* No. 12, p. 31). The letter to Lady Kingsmill is a third letter in the *Life of Donne* that closely follows the wording of the text of the *Letters*. The texts of all three letters vary in spelling and punctuation among the versions. The remaining two letters appear to have been edited by Walton. He omits several passages found in the 1651 text of the letter [To George Garrard 7 January 1630] "SIR, This advantage you, and my other friends have, by my frequent Fevers." In one omitted passage Donne defends himself against an accusation that he had feigned death to save expenses. The other long passage omitted deals with Donne's business and social activities. A passage with similar subject matter is omitted from the end of the remaining letter included in the *Life of Donne*, "To Sir H. Goodere," "SIR, EVery Tuesday I make account that I turn a great hour-glas" (Life of Donne 128; 1651 Letters No. 18, p. 48). Walton's omissions from the text of the 1651 Letters are logical. Because he wanted to portray Donne as an exemplary divine, Walton avoided references to secular aspects of Donne's life and the unpleasant accusation of Donne's parsimony.

"Tobie Mathews Collection," 1660

Keynes (147-48) lists thirty-eight letters to and by Donne in the Tobie Mathews Collection. Feil, however, lists fifty letters to and by Donne, adding three letters by Donne and nine to Donne to Keynes's list. Feil's attributions of the letters are based on his analysis of the Tobie Mathews Collection:

> The letters themselves, despite the chaotic arrangement noted and lamented by Spedding and Gosse, do have a rough sort of order. Those appearing up to p. 234 seem to comprise the original collection with a few added after the address To the Reader was written but before Sir Tobie left England; from 235 through 267, the additions made during Matthew's last exile. On p. 268 begins a letter from the King of Morocco to Charles I, written in 1637. Yet the address To the Reader refers to the collection as "a handfull of Engl Letters" and states that Sir Tobie's purpose in bringing them together was to honor his country by demonstrating that his countrymen were the best letterwriters in the world. The King of Morocco's letter, therefore, marks a break both in the rough chronological arrangement of the letters and with the rationale of the collection as a whole. It would seem, therefore, to have been added by Donne [Donne's son]; and this conjecture is confirmed by the rest of the book, pp. 272-356, which consists entirely of letters to or from his father. Thus we see that John Donne, Jr., was not only the most logical candidate for Montague or Hall [Mathew's executors] to select, but having held back or subsequently discovered 40 letters which he had not printed in 1651 . . . not enough to bring out by themselves, he was delighted to be able to attach them to Sir Tobie's Collection. The resultant work thus consists of 133 letters written between 1600 and 1640, together with 18 dating from 1641 to 1651 or 1652; the King of Morocco's letter; and 42 separate Donne items, a total of 194 letters. (276-77)

Feil's "42 Donne items" are the forty-two letters added by John Donne Jr. to the original collection of 151 letters made by Sir Tobie Mathew. Thus, of the "42 Donne items," thirty-three are listed by Keynes as being written by or to John Donne. Of the ten letters Feil adds to the Donne items in this part of the T.M.C., one is from the King of Morocco to the King of England; eight, Feil believes, were written by Sir Tobie Mathew to Donne; and one was written by Viscount Doncaster to Donne. The portion of the collection that Feil suggests was originally made by Mathew contains five letters by Donne which are accepted by Keynes, and Feil suggests that three more letters were also written by Donne. Thus, Keynes suggests that thirty-eight letters having to do with Donne were included in the collection: thirty by Donne and eight to him; Feil suggests that fifty letters having to do with Donne were included in the collection: thirty-three by Donne and seventeen to him. The letters that concern us here are obviously the three letters that Feil suggests were possibly written by Donne, the letters numbered 37, 38, and 39, pp. 74-77 of the Tobie Mathews Collection. Feil is cautious in his attribution of these letters to Donne:

> All three sound to me like Donne letters, and we know that Matthew had been in correspondence with Donne about Raleigh. On the other hand, Matthew quite formally identified Donne in four of his headnotes as "Doctor Dunne," and the letter on p. 74 is described as "from one dear Friend to another" and could, indeed, have been written by another of Matthew's close friends, one for whom he preserved a more lively affection than he seems to have had for Donne. (302-03, n. 2)

I include these three letters in Appendix V, because they contain no conclusive internal or stylistic evidence which indicates that they were written by Donne. They may well have been written by Donne. The three letters appear to be part of a single correspondence, but unlike the letters in the Burley MS., for example, there are no extant letters that can be confirmed were written to Mathew with which to link these. Other letters that we have which were written by Donne to Mathew were written ten years later and were about other matters.

Collations of the letters that appear in the _Tobie Mathews Collection_ and other seventeenth-century publications show that Mathew omitted passages having to do with religious doctrine which he did not find congenial (see _Letters_ No. 197, ll. 47-59, for example). Mathew had converted to Catholicism at Florence in 1606 and later taken orders. He was banished from England for several long periods. He remained a staunch Catholic until his death.

Of the thirty confirmed Donne letters, twenty-five were printed here first, four were first printed in the 1651 _Letters_, and one was first printed in the _Cabala_, 1654. The letters repeated from the two earlier publications suggest Donne's son edited the _Tobie Mathews Collection_ with the same motives he displays in the 1651 _Letters_: to impress his patronesses (in this case, the Countess of Carlisle and Lady Kingsmill) and to include letters to a variety of people who were still considered to be well known in 1660. Lady Kingsmill is almost as prominent in the _Tobie Mathews Collection_ as she was in the _Letters_ with two of the thirty letters addressed to her. Mrs. Bridget Dunch, however, was dropped and the book is dedicated instead to the Countess of Carlisle, "the aged widow of his father's friend, James Hay, Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle" (Gosse I: xiv). Hay was one of the early favorites of James I, whose patronage of Donne dated back to 1608 (Bald, _Life_ 160-61). Thus the letters repeated from the earlier collection include two to Lady Kingsmill, again placed near the beginning of the letters (Nos. 4 and 5, pp. 106 and 110, respectively); one letter to Sir Robert Carre (later the Earl of Somerset) written when he was Viscount Rochester; and one letter to the Duke of Buckingham, who had replaced Carre as the King's favorite after the Thomas Overbury affair. The fifth letter was to Donne's friend Sir Robert Karre, cousin of Sir Robert Carre, Earl of Somerset. A higher proportion of the Donne letters in the Tobie Mathews Collection was written to "persons of honour" than in the Letters, probably because many of these letters are from the later period of Donne's life when his official duties brought him into contact with important public figures such as James' daughter Elizabeth, the Queen of Bohemia. The Tobie Mathews Collection also includes some more homely letters, including one to Donne's mother and five to Mrs. Cokayne. Many letters in this collection have deliberately been given anonymous headings. For example, the first letter in the collection is headed "Doctor Dunne, in Kindnesse to an absent Friend," and the following letter, "Of the same to the same, upon a like occasion." There are no letters in this collection addressed to Henry Goodyer, George Garrard, or Sir Henry Wotton, three of the four main correspondents of the Letters. The fourth main correspondent from the Letters, Sir Robert Karre, is addressed in two of the letters (pp. 305, 307) and a third is assigned to him (p. 312) (Keynes 147).

The Tobie Mathews Collection was reissued in 1692 with a new title page inserted after the original title page of 1660 (Keynes 152).

Walton's "Life of Herbert," 1670

Walton's Life of Herbert contains four letters published for the first time from John Donne to Magdalen Herbert, George Herbert's mother. Walton likely obtained the letters while collecting material for Herbert's life. Walton gives specific dates in July and August 1607 for all four letters, but these are suspect. These four letters are also printed in the subsequent editions of Walton's Lives, 1670.

Walton's "Lives," 1670

Walton prints seven of Donne's letters in the chapter on the "Life of Donne" found in his Lives of Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, and George Herbert. Four of these are the letters to Magdalen Herbert reprinted from Walton's Life of Herbert. The other three letters are included without headings and Walton uses them, as he clearly states, to illustrate Donne's state of mind rather than as historical documents. The first two letters (pp. 29-31) of the Lives are, as R. E. Bennett ("Walton's Use" 31-32) has shown, synthetic letters Walton made up of selections from other letters. The first of the two letters which begins "______________ And the reason why I did not send an answer to your last weeks letter . . ." is a combination of quotations and paraphrases of Letter No. 50 (p. 150) of the Letters combined with the date line of Aug. 10 from another letter. Walton closes the letter by adding a phrase that appears in some of Donne's other letters, "From my hospital at Mitcham." Bennett dates the original letter by its references to the Earl of Somerset's marriage and the illness of John Harington. Walton leaves both references out of the extract because Donne did not live at

Mitcham when those events occurred, nor could the letter have been written in August of any year, but must have been written in January or February of 1613/14 because the events discussed in the letter were news then ("Walton's Use" 30). The second letter beginning "________ For we hardly discover a sin" (p. 29) is a composite letter made up of eight passages from five different letters to which Walton adds his own date. Bennett identifies passages from letters No. 18, 27, 20, 74 and 12 of the 1651 Letters. Thus Walton freely fits the letters to the occasion he is trying to illustrate. Walton's Lives was the last book published in the seventeenth century which contained copies of Donne's letters.

"The Loseley MSS."

The Loseley Manuscripts. Manuscripts and other rare documents, . . . Preserved in the muniment room of James More Molyneux, Esq. At Loseley House, in Surrey was edited in 1836 by Alfred J. Kempe. Loseley House was, of course, the home of Sir George More, Donne's father-in-law, and the Donne letters preserved there were written to Sir George More or other family members. Kempe found and printed ten Donne letters from the Loseley MSS.; Gosse discovered and printed three more Donne letters; and a fourteenth letter in the MSS. was not found until the twentieth century when it was printed in The London Mercury. The entire collection of the Loseley MSS. (which includes the fourteen Donne holographs) is now at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. This collection also includes excerpts from Donne's letters copied in an unidentified hand. I have included these excerpts in Appendix IV and, where possible, have indicated the letters from which they were taken.

The Burley-on-the-Hill Letters, 1907

It was reported by Logan Pearsall Smith and repeated by Evelyn Simpson (301) and others that the Burley-on-the-Hill Manuscript was destroyed by fire after 1907. Evelyn Simpson thus printed the letters believed to be Donne's from a transcript of the MS. made by order of the Clarendon Press. Peter C. Beal's Index of Literary Manuscripts (I: 256, Item 53), however, reports that the Burley MS. was not destroyed as previously believed and is located at the Leicestershire Record Office. Thus, the microfilm of the original Burley MS. is the source for this text. The thirty-two letters discovered by Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith among the papers of Sir Henry Wotton at Burley-on-the-Hill in 1907 and attributed by him to Donne were first printed by Evelyn Simpson in her 1924 edition of John Donne: Selected Prose. Of the thirty-two letters, Smith and Simpson judged eighteen to be in the hand of an unknown scribe (D_1), and the other fourteen to have been in the hand of William Parkhurst (P hand), one of Wotton's secretaries.

Simpson accepts the eighteen letters in D_1 hand as having been written by Donne. She rejects three letters in the P hand and places them in an appendix. She includes fourteen letters in the P hand but considers one of them (Number 28) as unlikely to have been Donne's. The other thirteen Simpson considers to be Donne's with greater or lesser degrees of certainty. She suggests letters 25, 30, and 32 were clearly by Donne, and that letters 19, 24, 27, and 29 were "probably" or "evidently" by Donne. She does not comment on or states that there is no evidence of authorship for letters 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, and 31, which she has nevertheless included because she believes them to be Donne's. I. A. Shapiro accepts only three of the entire thirty-two letters as Donne's: Nos. 11, 14, and 32. He regards 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 21, 22, 25, 29, and 30 as possibly having been written by Donne. He is "very doubtful" of Nos. 1, 4, 10, 13, 15, 17, and 27, and he completely rejects Nos. 5, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, and 31. Shapiro would relegate all but Nos. 11, 14, and 32 to an Appendix and considers them "unjustifiable and unsafe" as biographical source material (Shapiro, "The Burley Letters").

Shapiro does not give specific reasons for his acceptance or rejection of the Donne letters, since he planned to do so in an edition of the letters. He takes the view (along with Bennett and other critics) that the letters were copied as examples of "epistolary specimens" of "very diverse origin." This view is in opposition to Grierson's view of the letters that appear in both the Burley-on-the-Hill MS. and the _Poems_. Grierson thought that the letters, along with the poems, were collected for more personal reasons, and, in the case of the _Poems_, were included simply because they were part of the commonplace book in which the poems were collected. The three letters Shapiro regards as undoubtedly Donne's are irrefutably his: one (No. 11) refers to his paradoxes and satires and accompanies the Paradoxes in the MS.;* another (No. 32) is closely linked to Donne's life because it expresses thoughts repeated in other letters of Donne about how friends will regard his taking orders; and the third letter which Shapiro accepts unreservedly (No. 14) follows as a postscript to Donne's verse letter "To Sir H.W. going to Venice." While Shapiro accepts as Donne's those three letters which are unquestionably his, most of the doubtful letters have been accepted de facto by various critics.

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*Helen Peters states that I. A. Shapiro informed her that he doubts that this letter was written to Wotton, although he could not suggest a suitable candidate to replace Wotton as the recipient; and, further, that he considers 1600 to be the earliest possible date of the letter. Peters accepts both of Shapiro's revised views, although he gives no reason for either. Peters adds, "One must also wonder whether Wotton would have had a copy made against Donne's expressed wish to the contrary" (xxv, n. 2). The onus of proof here seems to me to be on Shapiro and Peters. Since

For the most part, the letters attributed to Donne in the Burley-on-the-Hill manuscript are what might be expected. They are primarily letters written to Wotton, with some possibly to friends of Wotton, and some examples of letters to great ladies (probably to the Countess of Bedford). The one puzzling inclusion is Letter No. 13, which appears to be a letter from Donne to Sir Thomas Egerton concerning Donne's secret marriage to Anne More. As Simpson (319) points out, this letter is very similar to other letters to Egerton and Sir George More written in February 1601/2. The question is, how would Wotton have obtained it for his commonplace book? The answer is suggested by the letter that Donne wrote to Wotton accompanying his paradoxes (Burley MS., f. 308^v). Donne asks Wotton not to make copies of them:

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the Burley MSS. was Wotton's commonplace book, Wotton would be the most logical recipient of unaddressed letters included in it which do not include internal evidence that they were written to someone else. Moreover, Peters' attempt to defend Wotton's character by denying him to be the recipient of the letter actually makes Wotton out to be worse than if he were the recipient of the letter. Wotton was obviously responsible for having the Paradoxes copied against Donne's instructions because they were copied into Wotton's book against the instructions in Donne's letter. If Wotton were the recipient of the letter, that is bad; if Wotton had them copied from a letter sent to someone else to which he had access, his behavior is even worse.

> yet S^{r} though I know there low price
> except I receue by y^{r} next lett^{r} an assurance
> upon the religion of y^{r} frendship y^{t} no coppy
> shalbee taken for any respect of these or any other
> my compositions sent to y^{o}, I shall sinn against
> my conscience if I send y^{o} any more. I speake
> y^{t} in playnes w^{ch} becomes (methinks) o^{r} honestyes;
> & therfore call not this a distrustfull but a free
> spirit: I meane to aquaint y^{o} wth all myne:
> and to my satyrs there belongs some feare & to some
> elegies & these perhaps shame. against both w^{ch}
> affections although I be tough enough yet I haue
> a ridling disposition to bee ashamed of feare &
> afrayd of shame. therfore I am desirous to hide
> them wthout any over reconing of them or there
> maker.

Following this letter in the Burley MS. is the transcriber's note, "Here follow Donne's Paradoxes 'That all things kill themselues', etc." The transcriber's note shows that Wotton had the paradoxes copied, despite Donne's specific request. If Donne had lent Wotton a commonplace book of his work with some personal letters included in it as well as his paradoxes, Wotton, or his secretary, would obviously not have hesitated to make copies, whether the letter was private or not. In fact, the striking conceits and emotional tone of this letter may well have attracted Wotton. The absence of the correspondents' names on the letter may have been Wotton's attempt to protect Donne's anonymity, or perhaps Donne himself omitted the headings and signature in his own copy for his own protection. It is certainly true that English collections of letters appreciated letters that dealt with conflict and strong feelings. The presentation of the letters in the Burley-on-the-Hill manuscript suggests the possibility that the younger Donne might have worked from similar commonplace books for at least part of the 1651 Letters and the Tobie Mathews Collection. If that is the case, some of the errors in the names of the correspondents and dates found in the 1651 Letters may have been inadvertent, not deliberate as Bennett contends. Bennett might also be overestimating the prestige of Ker and Carlisle, as well as Buckingham, in 1651 when he suggests that the names of Donne's correspondents were changed to people who were better remembered in 1651. Ker was dead and disgraced, Carlisle in exile and impoverished. Few of Donne's acquaintances either did well after the death of James or had their families do well after the revolution. Most of the families that Donne had known were no better off than Goodyer's in 1651. Moreover, the letters with deceptive headings were labelled, not to improve the social standing of the correspondent, but simply to provide variety. With one exception, the letters that have been altered have changed only the identity of the recipient, not the rank. The exception is *Letters* No. 32, entitled "To my Lord G.H." The other Goodyer letters that were altered included either no rank for the recipient ("To my worthy friend G.K.") or a title that was suitable for a knight, Goodyer's rank. Examples include the following letters now believed to have been written by Donne to Goodyer.

Letters No.	26	To Sir G.F.,
	35	To Sir G.M.,
	59	To my worthy friend G.K.,
	60	To Sir G.B.,
	67	To Sir G.B.,
	70	To Sir T.R.,
	72	To my good friend G.H.,
	82	To my worthy friend F.H.,

The close similarity between the initials used and Goodyer's suggests no serious attempt to deceive, except for the letters changed from Goodyer to Sir Thomas Lucy, changes which were obviously made to please the younger Donne's patronesses. Another piece of evidence in the younger Donne's favor is that letters to important people, such as the Earl of Somerset, are legitimate.

The Remaining Letters

The remaining twentieth-century collections of Donne's letters which include newly published Donne letters all modernize Donne's text in varying degrees. Two of these collections require specific comment here. The first is the group of sixteen Donne letters first published by Edmund Gosse in his The Life and Letters of John Donne. Gosse has earned, as R. C. Bald says, an "unenviable reputation for inaccuracy." Ernest W. Sullivan II provides additional evidence of Gosse's inaccuracy. Sullivan examines Donne's letter "To the Most Honorable and my most Honored L: The Marquis of Buckingham" (Bodleian Library, shelfmark MS. Tanner 73/2) and finds that Gosse made changes "involving one hundred and seventy-nine words or marks of punctuation . . . only one hundred and twelve of which are covered by his statement of editorial practise" (122). Sullivan further shows that Gosse used the text of the letter from the Letters as his copy text instead of the holograph which was available to him.

The remaining collection of Donne's letters that is of textual interest is John Hayward's collection in John Donne: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose. Hayward includes forty-one of Donne's letters "to illustrate, as far as possible, the trend of Donne's thought over the whole period of his adult life" (785). Hayward's letters are printed from various sources: sixteen from the 1651 Letters; nine from the Tobie

Mathews Collection; four from the Burley MSS. (Hayward used Simpson's transcriptions because it was believed that the Burley MSS. had been destroyed by fire); four from A. J. Kempe's edition of the Loseley MSS. (Hayward was not permitted to examine the Loseley MSS. itself and was thus forced to rely on the Kempe transcription); four from the Domestic State Papers at the Records Office; and six from "autographed originals" with three of these being printed for the first time. The six transcriptions made by Hayward from original letters concern us here. Hayward's Letter XIX will serve as an example; it is a short letter (fourteen lines in the body) first printed by Hayward (465-66). Hayward's transcription changes the lineation of the letter and contains thirty-seven changes in spelling and punctuation, all modernizations. Hayward's transcriptions were aimed at a general audience, not a scholarly one, and were modernized because of that. Nevertheless, the consequence is that no accurate texts of the letters are available for scholars.

The history of the texts of Donne's prose letters brings into relief their eclectic nature. All except one of the known letters have been printed. Some have been printed from texts that are available in holograph, some from manuscripts, others from printed sources only. Some letters exist in several versions offering the opportunity to compare texts to establish authority; others do not. Some letters contain internal evidence that supports or fails to support the authority of the text. Each of Donne's letters, then, must be considered individually and collated with all other versions of the letter that might have a claim to textual authority. Only a limited amount of this work has been done by Roger Bennett. Checking each letter for internal evidence of the authority of the text has occupied much of the textual analysis of Donne's prose letters. Up to now this work has been largely concentrated on the *Letters*, although a considerable amount of information about various letters can be found in the various Donne biographies which largely depend on interpreting and dating Donne's prose letters. R. C. Bald's *John Donne: A Life* is now considered the standard biography of Donne, and T. Hester in his 1977 facsimile reproduction of the 1651 *Letters* relies heavily on Bald's work (combined with Bennett's and Shapiro's) to produce a chronological listing of the letters in the *Letters* with their probable recipient. In this edition the letters are printed in their chronological order as far as that can be determined. When two letters are identical or the textual authority impossible to determine, the earliest letter is printed. The text of each letter is followed by a list of textual variants, notes, and annotations.

The authority of the various texts is as follows: the texts of the 1633 *Poems*, 1651 *Letters*, and the *Burley MS*. are probably, as Grierson and Bennett agree, "accurate allowing for the carelessness, indifference, and misunderstandings of secretaries and copyists." Of these three collections, only two letters are available in holograph, both from the 1651 *Letters*. The text of the letter to Sir Edward Herbert available in holograph that is printed in the 1651 *Letters* indicates that this level of accuracy is (as Sullivan points out) in the order of eighty changes affecting the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in a letter of 172 words. What kinds of changes are these? and what should an editor do about them? The changes are of three main kinds: identifying the correspondent, modernizing the text, and expanding abbreviations. To the original heading "To the Noblest Knight S^{r} Edward Herbert" is added the explanatory phrase "L. of Cherbury; *sent to him with his Book Biathanatos.*" This addition, counting punctuation but not underlining, accounts for eleven of the eighty or so changes to the text. The second kind of change, modernizing the text, includes changes to spelling (forty-nine changes including "y^t" to "that," "Itt" to "It," "bee" to "be," "y^e" to "the," etc.). These changes reflect contemporary seventeenth-century trends: "i" replaced "y in many words; "it" and "that" began to replace "y^t"; "the" replaced "y^e"; the use of "e" became more standardized, with fewer silent e's and fewer double e's being used; and the modern distinction in the use of "u" and "v" became standard. Punctuation was also modernized, but in this letter only seven changes in punctuation occur: "itselfe" is changed to "itselfe;" to emphasize the parallel structure of the phrases "not therfore kyll yttselfe; that ys, not bury itselfe." Two dashes and a period following them in the last line of the body of the letter are omitted in the printed text, and an ungrammatical comma after "frinde" in the closing is omitted in the printed text. The punctuation of Donne's signature is also changed from "J: DONNE." to "J. Donne." Donne's use of capitals was also modernized to some extent. Donne often follows the early seventeenth-century practice of capitalizing some words for emphasis. Sixteen of Donne's capitals are replaced by lower-case letters, and two words which occur in the middle of the sentences that Donne begins with lower-case letters are capitalized. The final kind of change to the holograph was the expansion of abbreviated words. Ten words were expanded in the printed text, including changes from "perform'd" to "performed," "excusd" to "excused," "yo^r" to "your," and the most frequent change, "w^{ch}" to "which."

What should an editor do about these changes when considering the texts of Donne's printed letters? The first thing to consider is that we have only two letters to compare directly with printed texts. These two letters are important, but they do not tell us how consistent Donne himself was in these matters. We do, however, have the thirty-eight Donne holographs, and those can tell us a great deal about Donne's headings as well as his spelling, punctuation, and capitalization and his use of abbreviations. The holographs reveal that Donne, like other early seventeenth-century writers, is inconsistent in his capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Donne's spelling follows the common seventeenth-century practice of interchanging "u" and "v," often using "v" at the beginning of words whether a modern "u" or "v" is called for: for example, in Letters No. 16 (l. 3) Donne writes "vngracious"; however, on l. 24 he writes "utter." Within words Donne does not consistently distinguish between medial "u's" and "v's" either. For example, in Letters No. 16 (l. 8) Donne writes "move," but in Letters No. 18 (l. 2) he writes "moue." Some tendencies are evident: Donne usually (but not always) substitutes medial "u" for "v"; he does not substitute "v" for medial "u." Here again, Donne follows common seventeenth-century practice. In other kinds of spelling Donne is also inconsistent. In Letters No. 18, for example, written in 1602, he writes twice on l. 2 "ytt," but on ll. 3 and 5 he writes "yt" and uses both forms for both "it" and "that." In Letters No. 76, written in 1610, he writes "ytt" on l. 5, "yt" on l. 6, and "ytt" on l. 10. Donne is similarly occasionally inconsistent in including or omitting silent e (keep/keepe, Letters No. 19, l. 30), doubling consonants, and forming compound words. Moreover, he apparently occasionally omits letters from a word unintentionally.

Donne's punctuation of the prose letters is also inconsistent by modern standards. Donne, for example, uses periods, colons, and semicolons as complete stops, but also ends a sentence without any punctuation. Sometimes, in the latter cases, new sentences are signalled by a capital; at other times they are not.

Donne also uses capitals inconsistently. In an early letter to Sir George More (No. 15), for example, Donne sometimes uses capitals after a colon (my self: To have), but an example from later in the same letter shows that sometimes he does not (full of passion: but I know). In this letter he consistently capitalizes the first word of a sentence, but in other letters he does not. He sometimes capitalizes an important word, but again he is not consistent. An example taken from the same letter to Sir George More will serve: "So long since, as at her being at york house, this had foundacion: and so much then of promise and Contract built vpon yt, as wthowt violence to Conscience might not be shaken." If "Contract" is capitalized, why not "promise," the other part of the parallel phrase? The answer is that Donne, like most other writers of his time, was not concerned with modern ideas of consistency.

Two aspects of Donne's writing are consistent throughout the holographs: he consistently abbreviates "which" to w^{ch}" and he consistently uses "y^{e}" for "the." Both of these practices are consistently altered in the printed letters. I note these changes here, however, rather than emending the texts of all of the printed letters. My editorial practice is to print what is, in my view, the most authoritative historical text for each letter and discuss any textual errors in my notes. I follow this practice to allow readers to judge the text for themselves, to avoid the possibility of introducing new errors into the text, and to sustain the historical integrity of the texts that I use. Other textual questions specific to individual letters I discuss in the notes to that letter.

The other seventeenth-century texts that permit comparison with the 1633 Poems and the Letters, i.e., the later editions of the Poems and the Sir Tobie Mathews Collection, are of less textual authority. The collation of the prose letters in the editions of the Poems from 1633 to 1719 shows that all subsequent printings of the letters that first appeared in 1633 were based on the 1633 text and that a gradual corruption of the 1633 text occurred. The text of the four letters added to 1635 is less accurate than the 1651 Letters. The letters in the Tobie Mathews Collection which can be compared with the Letters indicate variations in spelling, punctuation and capitalization; they also indicate that passages that dealt with religious matters were censored. Therefore, the Tobie Mathews Collection is less authoritative than the Letters. There is no other source for the four Donne letters to Magdalen Herbert than Walton's 1670 Lives; therefore, we must accept his text. Walton's alterations to the texts of the other letters that appear in the 1658 Life of Donne, however, suggest that his versions of Donne's letters are less accurate than the best of the seventeenth-century texts, the 1633 Poems and the 1651 Letters.

Transcriptions

I have followed the original line lengths for all the letters. Unusual spacing or typographical abnormalities such as words inserted above the line are imitated where possible or described in the transcription notes. Letters are headed with the names of the recipients as they are addressed wherever the name appears on the letter. If the recipient is not named and no address exists, the name of the recipient is supplied in square brackets. Letters are usually dated in a postscript. If no date appears in the letter, the date of the letter will also be supplied in as precise a form as possible in the Commentary. Words with abbreviation signs are transcribed with the abbreviated letters included and underlined. Words that are abbreviated without abbreviation signs (e.g., matt^r) are transcribed as written. Words which appear to be inadvertently abbreviated have the missing letters supplied in square brackets (obedienc[e]). Square brackets are also used to indicate printed words or letters which are damaged. Words inserted above the line are inserted in square brackets and described in the Textual Notes. Words that are legible but have been crossed out by Donne are reproduced with a line through them as in the original. Crossed-out words no longer legible are reproduced as completely as possible. Donne appears to follow the general practice of using v's to begin words starting with u or v, and using u's for u or v within words. There are some exceptions to the latter practice which I transcribe as written, although there is not always a clear distinction between the two letters.

The source of each transcription is given along with other transcriptions that have appeared in print. While I have checked my transcriptions against others that appear in print, I do not discuss the differences, except for the two letters discussed by Ernest W. Sullivan II, whose transcriptions and commentary are used to discuss the general difficulties of transcribing Donne's letters.

THE LETTERS

1596

1

S^{r}. You may thinke itt somewhat strang for me, being vnknowne, thus to
molest y^{o} vnacquainted: this fashion being never or not commonly
vsed but where it may be warranted wth some foreaquaitance: but S^{r}
I assure y^{o} itt is only an extraordinary estimation of y^{r} worth y^{t} makes
me run this extraordinary course: and iff itt be constrewed that my desire
familiarly to know y^{r} self, doth worke in me as good effects, as my longest
familiarity wth others my meaning is not mistaken: yf out of what I
write there be gathered any acceptable kindnes, y^{t}, and what is due both
I do assume vnto myself: if any overboldnes, y^{t} burthen must be borne
by o^{r} deare and worthy frend M^{r}. H. W. whose credit I haue in pawne
y^{t} y^{o} shall accept these lines (as I offer them) kindly and lovingly.
They haue nothing in charg but to tell y^{o} y^{t} the effect of y^{r} vertue
and worth besydes y^{e} autority of o^{r} forenamed frends reports haue made
you already knowne vnto me, but y^{t} knowledg is as a tast
w^{ch} doth rather stir vpp appetite then satisfy itt: and y^{t} therefore
I do infinitly desire to increase itt by o^{r} acquaintance: and for y^{t}
purpose (being vnwilling to attend so long an occasion as
o^{r} meeting) I do this according to the fashion of a soldier (w^{ch}
occupation for a while I professe) charg y^{o} wth this health: y^{t}
y^{o} do me reason itt shalbee an argument of exceeding
curtesy, a confirmation of y^{r} frends iudgment, & the world report
& lastly itt shall tye vnto y^{o} the loue though of an vnworthy
yett of an honest & assured frend.

Source: Burley MS., f. 302^{v}, according to the microfilm copy. Simpson (323) paginates the letter f. 309^{v}.

Transcription Notes

This letter is in what Simpson and Smith term the P hand (see Textual Introduction, p. lxxviii). It is carelessly written compared to the D$_1$ hand letters in the Burley MS.

Commentary

Simpson suggests that the letter is from Donne to a gentleman, perhaps a friend of Wotton's, whose acquaintance he desires to make.

> If it is Donne's, it must belong to the earlier part of his career, as it was only before 1598 that he could speak of himself as professing the occupation of a soldier, and 1596, the year of the Cadiz expedition, or 1597, that of the Islands voyage, would be the most likely date. (Simpson 323)

Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") rejects that this letter was written by Donne completely without giving a reason. I am inclined to accept this letter as Donne's because, although it follows some aspects of conventional epistolary prescription (see Feil 256-73 for a discussion of epistolary conventions), it uses a technique that he often employs in his letters to people he does not know who are his social superiors: he discusses virtue. For example, in this letter the writer professes an admiration for the person's virtue as a reason for writing; he explains how mutual friends are the source of this information and the instigators of the letter and describes the beneficial effect the person's virtue has already had on him. These same techniques are used in Donne's first verse letter to the Countess of Bedford: "Reason is our Soule's Left Hand." He begins by addressing her as a divinity that he has admired from afar (i.e., her virtue has attracted him). Her friends are responsible for his knowledge of her:

> Therefore I study you first in your Saints,
> Those friends, whom your election glorifies.
> (Milgate 90)

Approaching the Countess herself, who is God's "Factor for our lives," makes Donne's acquaintance with her a means of achieving virtue.

Donne's use of virtue as a subject when writing to men who are his friends or patrons and courtly ladies is most marked in his verse letters, but is often the subject of prose letters as well (see Milgate xxxiii-xl). In a quite different context is Donne's letter of 31 August 1619 to Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador to the Netherlands. During Doncaster's embassy to Germany, Donne was instructed to write to Carleton (whom he did not know) about changing the arrangements for forwarding the embassy's travelling funds. As in this prose letter, Donne begins his letter to Carleton by commenting that he is unknown to his correspondent and asking pardon for presuming to write. In both letters Donne justifies his letter through the authority of mutual friends, although in the letter to Wotton he is playful, while in the letter to Carleton, Doncaster's authority is treated seriously:

> I present to yo^{r} Lp: here a hand, w^{ch}, I thinke, you never saw, and
> a name w^{ch} carryes no such merit, w^{t} yt, as that it should be well knowen
> to yo^{w}: but yet y^{t} ys the hand, and the name of a person very much
> deuoted to yo^{r} Lps service. If that be not inough to excuse my present
> importunity, thys is abundantly inough that herin I execute a commandement
> of my L: of Doncaster.

This letter may be to the same person as No. 4 (Burley MS., f. 234); the contents of that letter suggest that a new friendship has begun and is in an early stage.

1597

2

writen
from plymouth The first act of y^t play w^{ch} I sayd I would go over y^e
water to see is done & yet y^e people hisse. how it will end
I know not ast ego vicissim risero. it is true y^t Jonas was
in a whales belly three dayes but hee came not voluntary as
I did nor was troubled wth y^e stinke of 150 land soldiers as wee
& I was there 20 dayes of so very very bad wether y^t even
some of y^e marriners haue beene drawen to thinke it were
not altogether amisse to pray & my self heard one of y^{em}
say god help vs. for all o^r paynes wee haue seene y^e land
of promise spaine whether wee shall enter or no I guess not
I think there is a blott in there tables but perchaunce tis not
on o^r dice to hitt it. wee are now againe at plymouth quasi
ply = mouth; for wee do nothing but eate & scarce that:
I think when wee came in the burghers tooke vs for y^e spanish
fleet for they haue either hid or convayd all there mony.
never was extreame beggery so extreamely braue except
when a company of mummers had lost theire box. I do not think
that 77 Kelleys could distill 10^t out of all y^e towne he y^t hath supt
and hath 2 or 3^s ~~in-his-purse~~ is a king; for none hath a crowne
fayth lands ierkins knighthoods are reprobate pawnes & but
for y^e much gay cloathes (w^{ch} yet are much melted) I should
thinke wee were in vtopia: all are so vtterly coyneles. in one
bad bare word y^e want is so generall that y^e Lo: generall
wants & till this day wee wanted y^e Lo: generall: y^o will
pardone me if I write nothing ernest. Salute all whome thou
louest in my name & loue me as I would deserue.

Source: Burley MS., f. 294^v

Textual Notes

For a discussion of Simpson's treatment of the Burley-on-the-Hill letters, see the Textual Introduction, pp. lxxviii-lxxxiii.

Notes

ll. 2-3 ast ego vicissim risero: but I for one, on the other hand, will have had a good laugh.

l. 11 plymouth quasi ply = mouth] Transcribed as written. This phrase is a pun. Donne is saying that plymouth is virtually ply mouth because eating (plying your mouth) is the only occupation of the troops. "Quasi" is used in the medieval sense of "virtually" (O.E.D.).

l. 18 77 Kelleys] Edward Kelley (1555-95). Kelley was a famous alchemist and charlatan who was associated with John Dee in an attempt to produce the philosopher's stone. Kelley claimed that he possessed the stone. The Emperor Rudolph II twice imprisoned Kelley to force him to reveal the secret. Kelley was killed in an escape attempt during the second imprisonment. There are numerous contemporary references to Kelley: Dekker's The Guls Hornebooke (1609) and Ben Jonson's Alchemist, Act IV, sc. i, l. 90, are examples (Simpson 304, n. 1).

l. 20 fayth ierkins knighthoods are reprobate pawnes] The sense of this is "by my faith, lands, jerkins [jackets] and knighthoods are worthless items to pawn."

Commentary

Simpson describes this letter as the earliest-known prose letter of Donne's.

> It belongs to the same occasion which gave rise to his verse letters, The Storme and The Calme written to his friend Christopher Brooke. The islands voyage of 1597 was less successful than the Cadiz expedition of the previous year, owing chiefly to the unfortunate weather which it experienced. A considerable fleet had been fitted out under the command of Essex, assisted by Howard and Raleigh, to destroy the new Spanish armada which was believed to be in preparation. Part of this fleet set out in June, but immediately encountered such tempests that it was forced to return to Plymouth, where the remainder of the expedition assembled. About the 9th of July

> the whole fleet put out to sea and after a few days of fair weather it met so fierce a storm that all the vessels were driven back to the English coast. It reassembled at Plymouth and was there refitted for sea, but owing to unfavorable weather it could not put forth again till 17 August. During this time Essex went up to court to receive fresh orders from the queen, and returned a few days before the fleet again put forth. (Simpson, Prose Works 304-05)

Simpson also compares Donne's description of the delay with Sir Arthur Gorge's description in A larger Relation of the said Iland Voyage. Gorge, the captain of Sir Walter Raleigh's ship the Warspite, treats the adventurers less sympathetically than Donne's letter, describing the

> great many of our young Gentlemen (who seeing that the boysterous winds and mercilesse Seas, had neither affinitie with London delicacie, nor Court bravery) as that discharging their high Plumes, and imbroydered Cassockes, they secretly retired themselves home, forgetting either to bid their friends farewell, or to take leave of their Generall.

Gorge also describes the behavior of the merchants differently than Donne does:

> During all this time of our abode in Plimouth, (which was some six or seven weekes) we neither found eyther want or dearth of any manner of victualls, either in the Towne, where our Mariners were daily resident, or in the Countrey, where the Land Army was quartered; nor yet that extreame manner of inhaunsing [enhancing] the prices of all things used in London, and in other places of the Realme, upon the extraordinary assembling of any such great troupes. (Simpson, Prose Works 304-05)

This letter is from the Burley MS., and, therefore, was probably written to Sir Henry Wotton, the original owner of the MS. Some letters in the Burley MS., however, contain references to Wotton. These probably were written to friends of his. Simpson establishes that the writer of this letter was on the islands voyage of 1597, but not that the writer was necessarily Donne. Baird W. Whitlock asserts that Walton's phrase that Donne "waited upon his Lordship" means that Donne accompanied Essex on his ship the "Mere Honor" and that Donne's poem "The Storm" describes his experience on that ship. If Whitlock's assumption is correct, Donne could not have written the letter as well as the poem because the letter does not describe events that happened to Essex's ship, although it does describe events that occurred to another part of the fleet under Lord Thomas Howard. The fleet was divided into three parts under Essex, Raleigh, and Howard.

> Those sections under Essex and Raleigh were completely scattered, and ships ended up in ports all along the southern coast of England. Raleigh reached Plymouth on the 18th [of July 1597], and Essex limped into Falmouth on the 19th, his ship so shattered that it could not be repaired for service that year. Lord Thomas Howard and his group, however, got through the storm without any real harm and sailed on to Spain. He awaited the rest of the fleet at the North Cape until word came of the disaster. With him, among others, were Southampton and Montjoy, the latter being in charge of the land forces of the expedition. They all returned to Plymouth on the 31st, Essex immediately taking over the Due Repulse, Howard's ship, and making plans for hourly sailing with a smaller fleet. It was not until August 17, however, that they actually got under way. (Whitlock 556)

Whitlock summarizes Donne's experience if he were aboard the "Mere Honor":

> Granting that Donne was aboard the Mere Honour, we can see certain basic facts of his experience. (1) He left Plymouth on July 10 and encountered a bad storm which is described in the poem; (2) He never went much farther south than the mouth of the English Channel; (3) As soon as the storm was over he went back into an English port, nine days after he left Plymouth. (556)

The letter, however, clearly indicates that the writer was out for 20 days and saw Spain, and, as Whitlock points out, this clearly points to someone in Howard's section of the fleet, which was away from England for twenty-one days and in sight of the Spanish coast at Finisterre.

While I. A. Shapiro thinks that the letter is probably not Donne's, he does not reject it for Whitlock's reasons.

> I hesitate to reject No. 1 outright only because we cannot be certain that Donne was aboard the Mere Honour with Essex. We must not read into Walton's statement that Donne "waited upon his Lordship" more than it may be meant to convey--namely, that Donne "accompanied" Essex on his two expeditions. Essex had a large retinue of admiring followers who doubtless competed eagerly for place on his ship, and there is no reason to suppose that Donne had any special claim to be included. If Donne was with Howard's squadron he would have experienced weather quite foul enough to inspire his poem "The Storme." It is quite certain, as Mr. Whitlock has pointed out, that the writer of Burley letter No. 1 was with Howard's squadron, as were most of the volunteers and soldiers. Howard's fifty and more vessels included at least five fly-boats. A list of "flyboats for the transportation of soldiers" in this expedition is among the State Papers in the Record Office (S.P. 12/264/19); of the total of 33, 19 carried 150 soldiers each. It seems likely that one of these 19 carried the writer of Burley letter No. 1, who complains of the "stinke of 150 land soldiers." ("The Burley Letters")

R. C. Bald joined the debate by pointing out that Donne's other verse letter connected with the islands expedition should also be considered. After the disaster of the storm, the fleet regrouped at Plymouth and set out again on August 17, 1597. Essex's new flagship, the Repulse, sprang a leak and caused him to be late in reaching Cape Finisterre, the first place of rendezvous. Raleigh accordingly proceeded to the second rendezvous off Lisbon, where he received word that the Spanish commander Adelantado had sailed with his fleet to the Azores to protect the treasure fleet arriving from the West Indies. Raleigh forwarded this intelligence to Essex, who immediately set off for the Azores and sent word for Raleigh to follow. Essex's account of the voyage does not mention the calm, but Sir Arthur Gorge's account of the voyage describes the same kind of calm as Donne's poem does, including the hot weather, the sailors bathing in the sea, and the discontent of the sailors who felt they were missing the action of engaging the enemy. Bald concludes:

> We are left free to suppose, if we wish, that he [Donne] was in one of the transports that had been under Lord Thomas Howard's command, for, as Mr. Shapiro remarks, he would there "have experienced weather quite foul enough to inspire The Storme." Nor, further, is there anything to prevent the supposition that, after the fleet set out again, the commander of this transport made the same error as Raleigh and joined him off Lisbon instead of waiting for Essex off Cape Finisterre. In other words, if, as is highly probable, Donne was aboard one of the ships that followed Raleigh, it is still possible to make a case for his authorship of the first letter in the Burley MS. ("Donne's Letters" 700)

I accept Bald's account of the verse letters and their relation to the events of Essex's expedition. Aside from the external evidence, the only other possible way to determine whether this letter is by Donne is on the grounds of style. I. A. Shapiro suggests that this is "the only ground" and that it is a "subjective and untrustworthy basis, especially as relatively little early prose by Donne is available for comparison." The letters in the Burley MS., however, among themselves, and in relationship to Donne's early verse letters and other prose works, contain not only some characteristic stylistic devices, but also a consistent group of topics. For a more complete discussion of the relationship, see the General Introduction, pp. xxx-xxxiii. In this letter, the fondness for paradox, the imagery taken from the theatre, alchemy, literature and the Bible all suggest Donne. While perhaps not strong internal evidence for Donne's authorship, the opening sentences are consistent with two aspects of Donne's character described by Sir Richard Baker in his Chronicles (1st ed., 1643, Part II, p. 156), i.e., that he was fastidious and that he greatly enjoyed plays: "Mr. John Dunne, who leaving Oxford lived at the Innes of Court, not dissolute but very neat; . . . a great frequenter of Playes."

1598

3

S^{r}.
I promised a iorney like godfathers w^{ch} promise & vow
three things for children before they know whether it bee
in the childrens destiny to bee able to keepe there vowes or no.
for I am since overtaken, & mett & inwrapd in busineses w^{ch}
I could nether suspect nor avoyd: nothing else could haue
made me comm̲itt this omission. for w^{ch} yet I will not aske
pardon bycause y^{o} cannot giue it & my verie offence of not
comm̲ing is my punishment I meane the want of that good
company y^{o} haue & are. S^{r}. I would some great princes
or men were dead so I might chuse them or some states
or Countryes overthrowne so I were not in them y^{t} I might
haue some news to ease this itch of writing w^{ch} travayles
me for in o^{r} owne or in the d'amours Court I know nothing
worth y^{e} reporting whereof I might iustyfy this reprobate
headlong lett^{r}. w^{ch} least I heape vp many sins I will here
cut off.
always & all wayes y^{rs}

Source: Burley MS., f. 298

Commentary

This letter is from the Burley MS. and, therefore, was probably written to Sir Henry Wotton, the original owner of the MS. Simpson suggests a possible date for the letter as early 1598 because of the reference to the "d'amours Court": "This seems to be a reference to the Christmas revel of the Prince d'Amour at the Middle Temple, when Richard Martin (a friend of Donne's) was the Prince, and John Hoskyns made "a tuftaffeta speech." This revel was probably acted during the Christmas season of 1597-98 (Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, I: 169; and L. B. Osborn, John Hoskyns 10-11) (Simpson 312n.). This is one of only twelve of the Burley letters that I. A. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") considers as possibly being written by Donne; however, Shapiro cautions that identification of these letters is not certain enough to allow their use as a source of biographical material. Both the language and rhetoric bear strong resemblance to other letters of Donne: especially the parallel phrasing, the playful use of language evident in the use of paradox ("commit the omission"), and puns (alwayes & all wayes y^{rs}), and the apology in the form of an argument: "I will not aske pardon bycause y^{o} cannot giue it & my verie offence of not coming is my punishment." I therefore accept this as a letter of Donne's.

1599

4

S^{r}.

In y^{r} whole fortune you haue not adventured so much, nor throwne y^{r} self into so great daungers as by descending into my frendship: there can bee none found weaker then my self; yet I haue alwayes beene either so strong or stubborne against any asault of fortune, that shee hath rather pickt quarrells wth my frends then wth my self & so in y^{t} Irel: & this Eng: & in other corners of y^{e} world: shee hath gleaned lately many of my deerest frends as though it were fault enough to loue me: but S^{r} my frendship cannot bee accessary to any such misfortune in you. bycause fortune saw in y^{o} many vertues & worthinesses fit to bee envied by her before it pleased y^{o} to betroath y^{r} frendship to me and so hath a directer quarrell to y^{o} for being learned & valiant & otherwise vertuous then for being content to allow me a roome in y^{r} good opinio$\underline{n}$. in w^{ch} as it hath pleased y^{o} to place me & giue me y^{e} assurance vnder y^{r} owne hand by y^{r} kind letter from Irel: so I intreat y^{t} I may continew y^{r} tenaunt there ever or so long till I bee slack in doing the offices & loving services to such a landlord. I would bee sorry you should stay long in y^{e} loathsomnes of Ire: for death & misery is in fashion there & much worne by the best men whome I feare least y^{o} should to much imitate & do as they do: dy. and so s^{r}: before I can see you I must dy to for my ernest desyre of seing you must make more hast then naturally I should how much better cheap may you see En: y^{r} desirous frends & peace & poore me, by retorning? I dare not doubt but that at y^{r} retorne y^{o} wilbe content y^{t} I see you & to giue me some knowledg thereof if y^{o} come into o^{r} parts y^{t} I may (if in no other worthines) yet in shewing my loue to y^{o} iustyfy y^{t} conceit w^{ch} through m^{r} W. you disdaine not to embrace of me. w^{ch} I would faine y^{t} I could tell y^{o} here in Eng: for in Ir: tis against y^{r} discretions to beleeve any thinge. S^{r} amongst all y^{r} oldest frends you haue none more gladder of y^{r} loue then I & this youth of my frendship hath such strenght y^{t} I hope it shall grow to haue experience wth yours & so full of a thankfull desire to see you I rest.

Source: Burley MS., f. 294

For a discussion of Simpson's treatment of the Burley-on-the-Hill letters, see the Textual Introduction, pp. lxxviii-lxxxiii.

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 306) suggests that this letter was written by Donne to a friend of Wotton in Ireland in the summer of 1599 and that

"Wotton was the intermediary through whom Donne and his correspondent had become acquainted." Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") accepts this letter as another possibly written by Donne. This letter could be a continuation of the correspondence initiated in Burley MS., f. 302^{v} (Letter No. 1), in which the writer is introducing himself to a friend of Wotton's. If that is the case, Donne's first letter, which was an overture of friendship, was accepted.

5

S^{r}.

but y^{t} I haue much ernest sorrow for y^{e} losse of many deere frends in Ire: I could make shift to greiue for y^{e} losse of a poore letter of mine w^{ch} sought y^{o} there after y^{r} retorne: in w^{ch} though there were nothing to bee commended but y^{t} was well suted for the place & barbarous enough to go thither: yet it should haue brought y^{e} thanks & betroathed to y^{o} the loue & services of one who had rather bee honest then fortunate: this letter hath a greater burthen & charge; for it caries not only an assuravnce of myself to you but it begs a pardon that I haue not in these weekes sought y^{o} out in Eng: by letters & acknowledged how deep roote the kindnes of y^{r} letter hath taken in me: but as in former innocent tymes estates of lands passed safly in few words (for these many entangling clauses are ether intended at least to p^{r}vent or breed deceit) so vnchangeable frendship being ever the same & therefore not subiect to the corruption of these tymes may now in these few & ill lines deliver me vnto y^{o} & assure y^{o} none hath better title then y^{o} in

y^{r} poore frend &
Lover.

Source: Burley MS., F. 299^{v}

Commentary

According to Simpson (307), this letter was probably written in the autumn of 1599, within a few weeks of Wotton's return from Ireland in September.

> It should be compared with Donne's verse letter, H.W. in Hiber: belligeranti, which was printed by Sir Herbert Grierson from the Burley MS. (Poems, i. 188-9), and also with two unsigned and undated letters in the same manuscript which Mr. Pearsall Smith printed (Wotton, i. 308-10) as having probably been written from Ireland by Wotton to Donne. In the verse letter Donne had complained that Wotton's friendship for him had suffered by the Irish expedition, since he had received so few letters.
>
> Went you to conquer? and have so much lost
> Yourself, that what in you was best and most,
> Respective friendship, should so quickly dye?
>
> Wotton's answer indicated that he had received very few letters from Donne, and that at least one of his own must have been lost on the way.

Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") accepts this letter as possibly having been written by Donne. The similarities between the verse letter H. W. is Hiber: belligeranti and this letter provide convincing evidence that this is one of Donne's letters. Both letters discuss the many mutual friends who have died in Ireland, the barbarity and debasing nature of the place, the concern of the writer with friendship and the difficulty of maintaining friendship, and the corruption of a man's character caused by worldly experience. These are common themes of Donne's verse letter as well as other early prose letters.

The verse letter to Wotton in Ireland begins with a combination of a figurative reference to the death (the loss) of a letter and a literal reference to the deaths of many of Donne's friends who had gone to Ireland; the prose letter begins with a figurative reference to the death of friendship in Wotton's mind and a literal reference to the deaths of mutual friends in Ireland. The verse letter begins as follows:

> Went you to conquer? and have so much lost
> Yourself, that what in you was best and most,
> Respective frendship, should so quickly dye?
> In publique gaine my share'is not such that I
> Would lose your love for Ireland: better cheap

I pardon death (who though hee do not reap,
Yet gleanes hee many of our frends away)
Then that your waking mind should bee a pray
To letargies. (Milgate 74)

6

S^{r} That Loue w^{ch} went wth you followes & overtakes & meetes you. if words seald vp in letters be like words spoken in those frosty places where they are not heard till y^{e} next thaw they haue yet this advantage y^{t} where they are heard they are herd only by one or such as in his iudgment they are fitt for. I am no Courtier for wthout having liued there desirously I cannot haue sin'd enough to haue deserv'd that reprobate name: I may sometymes come thither & bee no courtier as well as they may sometymes go to chapell & yet are no christians. I am there now where because I must do some evill I envy y^{r} being in y^{e} country not that it is a vice will make any great shew here for they liue at a far greter rate & expence of wickednes. but because I will not be vtterly out of fashion & vnsociable. I gleane such vices as the greater men (whose barnes are full) scatter. yet I learne that y^{e} learnedst in vice suffer some misery for when they haue reapd flattery or any other fault long there comes some other new vice in request wherein they are vnpracticed. only y^{e} women are free from this charg for they are sure they cannot bee worse nor more throwne downe then they haue beene: they haue perchance heard that god will hasten his iudgment for y^{e} rigtheous sake. & they affect not that hast & therfore seeke to lengthen out y^{e} world by their wickednes. The Court is not great but full of iollyty & revells & playes and as merry as if it were not sick: her m^{tie} is well disposd & very gratious in publique to my Lo: Mountioy my lo: of Essex & his trayne are no more mist here then the Aungells w^{ch} were cast downe from heaven nor (for anything I see) likelyer to retourne. he withers still in his sicknes & plods on to his end in the same pace where y^{o} left vs. the worst accidents of his sicknes are y^{t} he conspires wth it & y^{t} it is not here beleeved. that w^{ch} was sayd of Cato y^{t} his age vnderstood him not I feare may be averted of y^{r} lo: that he vnderstood not his age: for it is a naturall weaknes of innocency. That such men want lockes for themselues & keyse for others.

Source: Burley MS., f. 296^{v}

Textual Notes

l. 9 "yet" is inserted above the line.

l. 23 "rigtheous": righteous (transcriber's error)

Notes

ll. 2-3 Simpson cites Plutarch, Moralia, De profectibus in virtute, c. 7, and Rabelais, Bk. IV, c. 55, and further notes: "There is a reference to this passage of Rabelais in the verses headed 'Incipit Ionnes Dones' prefixed to Coryat's Crudities, 1611, sig. f 5 verso (ll. 11-13)":

> It's not that French which made his Gyant see
> Those vncouth Ilands where words frozen bee,
> Till by the thaw next yeare they'r voic't againe.

Rabelais is also referred to in Burley MS. No. 14, the postscript which accompanied Donne's verse letter to Wotton "To Sir H.W. going to Venice."

The conceit of frozen words also appears in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (Book II, 55).

l. 27 Lord Mountioy: Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire and eighth Lord Mountjoy (1563-1606). At this time he was a rival of Essex's for the Queen's favour. Later he apparently wounded Essex in a duel, after which they were reconciled. Mountjoy was fortunate to escape being charged for treason with Essex but he had succeeded Essex in Ireland and was too useful to destroy. He later lived with and finally married Essex's sister, Penelope Riche, who left her husband, Robert, third Lord Riche, for Mountjoy in one of the more notorious scandals of the age. Much later (in 1611 or 1612) Donne wrote a verse letter to two of

Penelope Riche's daughters by her first marriage, "A Letter to the Lady Carey, and Mrs Essex Riche."

l. 33 Cato: great-grandson of Cato the Censor, a man of unbending integrity, narrow, short sighted, and as impervious to reason as to bribery. He was the chief political antagonist of Caesar and the triumvirate, "the conscience of Rome." During the civil war he held Sicily for the Senate, but after the death of Pompey he was driven to Utica (northwest of Carthage), where, seeing that his cause was hopeless, he committed suicide (Paul Harvey 94).

l. 34 "averted": Simpson suggests that "adverted" may have been meant even though the context implies "reversed." Inverted might be a possibility, but the O.E.D. also gives "opposed" as a meaning of "averted." Donne may mean that Essex's predicament is the opposite of Cato's.

Commentary

The references to Essex implying he had been in disgrace for some months indicate clearly that the letter was written in 1600 (Simpson, Prose Works 310-11). Simpson suggests that Wotton was the recipient of the letter because Donne is writing from the court to a correspondent in the country. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") considers this letter to have been possibly written by Donne. Bald (Life 107) dates this letter "almost certainly" to the Christmas season of 1599-1600:

> The Course was at Greenwich; there were plays during the holidays; and the Queen was active and eager for amusement, coming almost every night into 'the presence, to see the ladies dawnce the old and new country dawnces, with the taber and pipe.'

Bald accepts this letter as Donne's because of the intimate knowledge of Essex's condition. Donne was, of course, a secretary of Sir Thomas Egerton's, the Lord Chancellor, and in that position would have had special access to information about Essex (Bald, *Life* 107-109).

7

S^{r}.
Methinks y^{r} good discretion should not call ill fortunes faulte.
nor threaten me wth y^{r} sylence because I wanted meanes to
answere y^{r} last let*ter*. it is not an age to looke for faultlesnes
in y^{r} frend it is well if wee err reasonably & excusably
therefore if y^{o} coole not in frendship be not loath to
write for letters are frendships sacraments. & wee
should be in charyty to receaue at all tymes. I would bee
loath to find a languishing or decay in my frends affec-
tions w^{ch} I feare y^{e} lesse bycause theire good opinions are
not built or sustaind by any my desert w^{ch} would soone
fayle but by theire owne iudgments from w^{ch} euery ma*n*
is loath to depart. but if y^{t} should fall out it would well
suite wth these tymes w^{ch} are ariued to y^{t} height of illnes
y^{t} no man dares accuse them bycause every one contributes
much himself to y^{t} accesse. Wee haue a new fashioned valor
to suffer any thing rather then misery a new fashiond
wisedome to cover imp*er*fections: & envy (w^{ch} not exceeding the
limits of emulacion & desire to equall worthy men p*er*chaunce
is no fault) is now growne a p*er*fect vice. for heretofore
it was but oposed to good fortune & so men might be thought to rich
now it is oposd to vertue & a man may be to good: If
vices bee extremities I wonder how every day such growth
& additions: but if wee complayne no otherwise then for-
mer ages, that is, if because wee see & feele o^{r} owne tymes
p*er*fectlyest, wee accuse most & that y^{e} prophesy of Horace
Etas parentu*m* peior etc belong also to o^{r} tymes, it may
serve vs for some comfort (though a hard shift) y^{t} are
already borne. and if as those w^{ch} travayle to y^{e} pole call
the english sothernly people so the world shall last to a tyme
so wicked y^{t} o^{r} age shalbe thought good in respect of that
as we do of former ages it is not 600 yeres nor 6000 w^{ch}
will bring the world to his p*er*iod o^{r} wickednes is to strong
& stobborne to be so soone weakened why then should wee
much desire lyfe or her delights since we see much ill & feare
more: since to bee out of fashion is to bee rude & barbarous &
to be in fashion is to be dishonest since poverty is dispised
& hapines envyed? since vertue is not only not worne
as a compleat royall garment but not as a color or a

or skarfe: no man desiring now to cover his vice wth her shew.
against these batteries S^{r} y^{o} do well to frame y^{o} an armor
of y^{t} mettall w^{ch} nature hath infused into y^{o}, & the loue of lear-
ning hath hammerd & fashioned: & being so strong against
these assaults as y^{o} are why should y^{o} hyde y^{r} self in the Cuntrey
when wee worse provided liue here in the Court & citty in
continuall battayle & yet I hope keep y^{e} reputacon of honest
men. but for my particular I do it not of iudgment or choyce
as they w^{ch} purpose to conquer as the helvetians as divers others
destroyed first there owne townes & burnt theire ships to quench
all hope of revenging, so am I in this warfare enforced to
fight it out bycause I know not whether to run: I cannot
therefore honestly perswade you to abandon y^{e} Country bycause
if my fortunes fitted it I should perswade y^{o} to stay there
by my exsample. yet I desyre much sometyme to see you
here & to haue y^{o} a litle trip though not fall nor stumble
att ambition or other distractions. least I seing an honest
man happy should begin for y^{r} sake to loue the world againe
w^{ch} I would be loath to do.

Source: Burley MS., f. 297-297^{v}

Transcription Notes

l. 20 "thought" inserted above the line

l. 38 "or a" inserted below the line

Notes

l. 22 Etas parentum peior, etc.: first the time of parents. The words are quoted from Horace, *Odes*, III. vi: 'aetas parentum, peior tulit / Nos nequiores, mox daturos / progeniem vitiosiorem' (Simpson, *Prose Works* 311n.). The entire sentence reads "The age of our fathers which was worse (than the first) bore us, who are even more evil soon to bear a progeny yet more vicious."

l. 40 as the helvetians: Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, lib. i. c.v.: the ancient people of Gallia Lugdunensis (Swiss) (*O.E.D.*)

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 312) suggests that the correspondent is probably Wotton, who was apparently living in the country, because the person addressed in this letter is living in the country. Wotton's country living is mentioned in several other letters in the Burley MS. Simpson dates the letter 1599-1600 and suggests that Donne writes "in the same tone of dissatisfaction with the court as in the previous letters." Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") accepts this letter as having possibly been written by Donne. Variations on the topic of life in the country compared to life in town or life at court are the subject of two of Donne's verse letters to Wotton, "Sir more then kisses" and "Here's no more newes," as well as Letter No. 6 (Burley-on-the-Hill MS., f. 296^v).

Donne uses an interesting combination of images having to do with virtue in this letter: "the decay of the age" Donne takes from a classical source, as he does the city-country debate. Virtue as a "complete royall garment" or an "armour" and the fight against vice associated with a journey, combat, and war suggest imagery from Spenser's The Faerie Queene perhaps more obviously here than in Donne's poetry, which uses similar imagery but in a contemporary way, not a chivalric way. For example, the military imagery in "Batter my heart three personed God" suggests seventeenth-century warfare; the journey in "Good Friday hiding Westward" is not a quest. In Donne's poetry the imagery is used primarily because of its impact, not because of its allegorical nature. The association between a lack of virtue and illness and decay both for the world and for the individual is a fundamental image in Donne's work and is used here as it is used throughout his poetry and prose writing.

8

I will answere y^{r} letter bycause I remember I had a
promyse from y^{o} of many of y^{em}. w^{ch} is not easy for you
to make me forgiue y^{o}. I vnderstand S^{r} Maurice
Barkly is in towne I haue sent my man vnto him cu*m*
salute plurima, but dare not wish him where we shall
meet at supp*er* least I com*m*it some exces of gladnes: Wee
are here yet not contented: though the very lookes
of princes be satisfactorie: but as honest minds are not apt
to do wrong so no doubt they receaue y^{e} deepest impresions
of iniuries. I am glad of y^{r} frendship for many
causes & amongst y^{e} rest y^{o} shall giue me leaue to make this
vse of it. y^{t} wee may sometymes togeather privately speake
of y^{e} course of these wor[l]dly things w^{ch} are governed wth
wth much instability. I will conclude y^{t} virtus is in terris
p*er*egrina in caelo civis.

Source: Burley MS., ll. 1-10, f. 295^{v}; ll. 11-15, f. 296

Transcription Notes

l. 8 "not" is inserted above the line.

ll. 11-12 Transcript "wth wth"" compositor error

l. 12 is: "est." See the note for l. 12.

Notes

l. 3 Sir Maurice Berkeley was knighted at Cadiz in 1596. According to Simpson (*Prose Works* 309, n.), Donne and Wotton probably made his acquaintance on that expedition. A notice of a letter from Wotton to Berkeley dated 19 April 1595 apparently accompanying a copy of a book written for Wotton (*I Fonti*) occurs in the *Rawl. MSS*. (B. 265, f. 13b), although the book has not been found (Smith I: 22, n. 3). According to J. P. Feil, Maurice Berkeley was also an acquaintance of Sir Tobie Mathew. "Donne and Mathews agreed that Sir George More talked too much and that little was to be expected from Sir Maurice Berkeley" (329). See T.M.C. Letters in Appendix III.

1. 4 cum salute plurima: with many a greeting

1. 12 virtus est in terris peregrina in caelo civis: Virtue is an alien on earth, but a permanent resident in heaven.

Douce made a note in the Bodleian copy of the first edition of the Reliquiae Wottonianae (Douce, W. 55): 'I have seen the following words written by Sir Henry Wotton in a German album: "Virtus in terris peregrina est, In caelo civis. Bono hospiti haec scripsi Henricus Wottonus, Anglo-Britannus, ex legatione Veneta domum rediens, Lutetiae Parisiorum Februarii xxvi, ci i cx".' The sentence was a favourite one with Wotton, who used it in a letter dated 25 Oct. 1592, and addressed to Lord Zouch: 'I imitate though not the nature, yet the fortune of virtue, which certainly is peregrina in terris, in caelo civis' (Pearsall Smith, i, 290). (Simpson 309)

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 309) suggests that both this letter and the next one (9) were written by Donne to Wotton and belong to the early part of 1600 when Essex was in disgrace and in the custody of Sir Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper. Wotton, who had returned in Essex's train from Ireland, had consequently withdrawn to the country. Donne had in the meantime become a secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton and was well placed to send news to Wotton of how events were affecting Essex's fortunes. As this letter implies, Donne and Wotton sympathized with Essex. Bald (Life 108) and Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") reject this letter as one of Donne's.

They spoke wthout
flattery that w^{ch}
wthout
suspition
of flattery
I cannot
repeate.

Omnes omnia bona dicere et laudare fortunas meas
Qui amicum haberem tali ingenio perditum. So much
of y^{t} matter. yo^{r} last (if it were so) y^{e} 25 of Ja: was but
receaved this morning: so y^{t} it lost y^{e} grace in a kind of
affectation of gravity. I had rather y^{o} would send y^{r} letters
in y^{e} french then in y^{e} spanish pace to me. I am now free
from an ague. though I am afrayd y^{e} state bee not so:
for certaynly the court hath in it much vnnaturall heate
& y^{e} courts & seats of princes are y^{e} harts of all realms w^{ch}
taking forme from theyre humors are more or lesse conscripted as they confine or enlarge theyre owne wills: when
I speake of y^{e} wills of princes I speake of verie vnlimited
things: well what so ever o^{r} diseases are I must wish y^{t} w^{ch}
perhaps is votum melioris civis q [a] viri, y^{t} is y^{t} they may be contagious: my meaning is I would have other states (or neighbours) infected wth them as well as o^{r} selus least wthin a while there be no
historie so rich of great errors nor peradventure of great vices
as ours. it was an excellent brag of Livies y^{t} y^{e} Ro: state (whose
actions he entended to deliv^{r}) was of all other in y^{e} world most
fertill of good examples. I call it a brag & so think it. for
certaynly all tymes are of owre nature & all courts produce ye same effects of envie & detraction of ielousy &
other humane weakneses. thus it must be till we gett
aboue y^{e} moone whose motions as some haue ingeniously erred do make vs variable. I can from hence requite you
wth no news w^{ch} hath made me fill paper wth the vanyty
of myne owne discourse. it shall end in letting y^{o} know
y^{t} in this place y^{o} are more vnacquaynted, then
obscure. & so I wish vs a bette[r] world.

Source: Burley MS., f. 295^{v}

Transcription Notes

ll. 1-3 The annotation in the margin occurs on three lines as follows:

They spoke wthout flattery that

w^{ch} wthout suspition of flattery

I cannot repeate.

l. 24 in: a blot obscures most of this word.

l. 25 bette[r]: the r does not appear in the original.

Notes

ll. 1-2 Omnes omnia bona dicere et laudare fortunas meas.

Qui amicum haberem tali ingenio perditum.

Everybody is saying all sorts of good things and praising my good fortune; how could one of my friends fall prey to such a device?

"Adapted from Terence, *Andria*, ll. 96-98. Donne substitutes 'amicum' for 'gnatum'" (Simpson, *Prose Works* 308).

l. 5 "y^{e} French then y^{e} Spanish pace": too quickly rather than too slowly.

l. 6 "free from an ague": Simpson (*Prose Works* 308) cites *Letters* (1651), p. 203: "your company, that place, and my promise are strong inducements, but an Ague flouts them all, of which I have had two such threatenings, that I provide against it by a little Physick."

l. 12 votum melioris civis $\overset{\bar{a}}{q}$ viri: the wish of a citizen rather than of a man.

l. 14 o^{r} selus: ourselves

l. 16 "an excellent brag of Livies": Livy's Preface, 4, "nulla unquam respublica . . . bonis exemplis ditior fuit" (Simpson, *Prose Works* 304).

l. 20 Simpson (*Prose Works* 309) cites a similar passage in

> Donne's verse letter 'To S^{r} Henry Wotton' (Grierson, i. 180-82), which denounces the evils found at court. There, however, the condemnation is a general one, forming part of Donne's contribution to a poetical dispute on the comparative evils of court, city, and country, in which Bacon, Wotton, and Thomas Bastard took part. Here Donne's dissatisfaction with the court is much more acute, probably owing to the disgrace of Essex.

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 309) suggests that this letter and the preceding one both belong to the early part of 1600 when Essex was in disgrace and in the custody of Sir Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper. Wotton, who had returned in Essex's train, had consequently retired to the country. Donne had in the meantime become a secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton and was well placed to send news to Wotton. In this letter Donne writes with characteristic distaste for the court. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") is "very doubtful" that Donne could have written this letter; Bald (Life 108) rejects it.

10

S^{r}.

I am no great voyager in other mens works: no swallower
nor devowrer of volumes nor pursuant of authors. perchance
it is because I find borne in my self knowledg or ap^{e}hension
enough for (wthout forfeiture or impeachment of
modesty) I think I am bou[n]d to god thankfully to acknowleg
it) to consyder him & my self: as when I haue at home
a convenient garden I covet not to walk in others broad
medows or woods especially because it falls not wthin that
short reach w^{ch} my foresight embraceth to see how I
should employ that w^{ch} I already know to travayle for inquiry
of more were to labor to gett a stomach & then
find no meat at home. To know how to liue by the booke
is a pedantery, & to do it is a bondage. for both hearers
& players are more delighted wth voluntary then wth
sett musike. And he that will liue by precept shalbe long
wthout y^{e} habite of honesty: as he that would every day
gather one or two feathers might become brawne wth
hard lying before he make a fether bed of his gettings.
That Erle of Arundell y^{t} last dyed (that tennis ball whome
fortune after tossing & banding brikwald into the hazard) in
his impriso[n]ment vsed more then much reading, & to
him y^{t} asked him why he did so he answerd he read so much
lest he should remember something. I am as far from
following his counsell as hee was from petruccios: but I
find it true that after long reading I can only tell
y^{o} how many leaves I haue read. I do therfore more

willingly blow & keep awake y^{t} smale coole w^{ch} god hath pleased to kindle in mee then farr off to gather a faggott of greene sticks w^{ch} consume wthout flame or heat in a black smoother: yet I read something but indeed not so much to avoyd as to enioy idlenes. Even when I begun to write these I flung away Dant the Italian a man pert enough to bee beeloved & to much to bee beeloued: it angred me that Celestine a pope far from the manners of other popes y^{t} he left even there seat should by y^{e} court of Dants witt bee attached & by him throwne into his purgatory. & it angred me as much, y^{t} in y^{e} life of a pope he should spy no greater fault, then y^{t} in y^{e} affectation of a cowardly securyty he slipt from y^{e} great burthen layd vpon him. alas? what would Dant haue him do? thus wee find the story related: he that thought himself next in succession by a trunke thorough a wall whispered in Celestines eare counsell to remoue y^{e} papacy: why should not Dant be content wth to thinke that Celestine tooke this for as imediate a salutacion & discourse of y^{e} holy ghost as Abrahim did the commandment of killing his sonn? if he will needs punish retyrednes thus what hell can his witt devise for ambition? & if white integryty merit this what shall Male or Malum w^{ch} Seneca condems most, deserve? but as y^{e} chancell: Hatton being told after a decree made y^{t} his p^{r}decessors was of another opinion he answered hee had his genius & I had myne: So say I of authors that they thinke & I thinke both reasonably yet posibly both erroniously; that is manly: for I am so far from perswading yea conselling y^{o} to beleeue others y^{t} I care not y^{t} y^{o} beleeue not mee when I say y^{t} others are not to bee beleeued: only beleeue that I loue you and I haue enough.

I have studied philosophy therefore marvayle not if I make such accompt of arguments que trahunt^{r} ab effectibꝰ.

Source: Burley MS., ll. 1-29, f. 298^{v}; ll. 30-58 and postscript, f. 299

Transcription Notes

l. 44	"to" is inserted above the line.

Notes

l. 11	"to gett a stomach": to work up an appetite
l. 17	brawne: calloused

Simpson (Prose Works 313) cites Wotton's use of a similar Venetian proverb, "che chi bada ad ogni piuma non fa mai letto," in correspondence with the authorities of Lucco during his ambassadorship (Smith I: 401 n.).

l. 19 The Earl of Arundel, Philip Howard, "died in 1595 after ten years' imprisonment in the Tower for his adherence to the Roman Catholic faith and for supposed complicity in plots against Elizabeth" (Simpson, Prose Works 313).

l. 20 Banding

> Banding is here used as the equivalent of bandying, cf. Fletcher, Custom of the Country, v. iv (folio 1647, p. 22): 'Our adverse fortune, banding us, from one hazard to another.' Brikwald, past tense of brickwall, a corruption of bricole from Fr. bricole, associated by popular etymology with the brick wall of the tennis-court (N.E.D.). The substantive bricole was a technical term for the rebound of a ball from the wall of a tennis-court, and from it was formed the verb bricole, 'to cause to rebound'. Donne uses the substantive in a letter in the Tobie Mathew Collection, p. 65. Hazard, each of the winning openings in a tennis-court. (Simpson, Prose Works 313)

l. 24 petruccios: Simpson (Prose Works 313) suggests that the reference is possibly to Petruccio Ubaldini, an Italian pensioner of Elizabeth, a man of letters and illuminator who lived in England from 1562 to 1586. The logic here is that Howard read copiously to remember nothing; Donne reads little but remembers as much as he can, although, like Howard, he is able to remember little if he reads much. Presumably Petruccio reads a great deal and remembers it.

l. 27 coole: coal. Simpson cites Fifty Sermons, 36.326:

> If thou canst in those embers, those cold ashes, finde out one small coale, and wilt take the paines to kneell downe, and blow that coale with thy devout Prayers.

l. 30 smoother: smother, i.e., smoke

l. 32 Dant: Dante

l. 34 Pope Celestine V was persuaded by Cardinal Gaetano that it was against his soul's health to retain the Papacy, and solemnly resigned his office, Gaetano being elected to succeed him as Boniface VIII. Dante does not mention Celestine by name, but according to the early commentators, particularly Boccaccio, he referred to Celestine in Canto iii. 59-60 of the Inferno: 'Vidi e conobbi l'ombra di colui / Che fece per vilta lo gran rifiuto.' (Simpson, Prose Works 314)

l. 50 male: badly malum: evil. "The passage is corrupt. According to Seneca the worst vice is to love vice" (Ep. xxxix.6). Donne may have written malle, malum, or have quoted Seneca's malorum ultimum.

l. 51 Sir Christopher Hatton (1540-91) was Lord Chancellor from 1587 to 1591. He was rumored to be one of Elizabeth's lovers. He examined many of the witnesses and those charged with various conspiracies against Elizabeth and customarily represented the Queen at their trials. He was also a friend of Sir John Harrington, father of Lucy, Countess of Bedford. One of the witnesses he examined was Edmund Neville, Lord Latimer.

postscript 'trahunt^{e} ab affectib^{9}': which follow from the results, the effects, the facts.

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 315) suggests that this is another letter from Donne to Wotton. The references to Italian literature probably appealed to Wotton, who was interested in it. In 1598 Lombardelli, a learned Sienese, published a small book in the form of a letter to Wotton, I Fonti Toscani, in which he describes Dante as one of the masters of Italian literature. In a list of Italian authors drawn up for some friend, Wotton comments that Dante is "Worthy the studying" (Smith II: 485). Donne, although he had apparently read Dante, indicates his dislike for Dante in this letter. Simpson points out that Dante was little read in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but Donne also alludes to him in the fourth Satire: 'and a trance Like his, who dreamt he saw hell, did advance It selfe on mee' (Grierson I: 164). Moreover, Donne defends Celestine's decision to withdraw from society, and by implication is defending Wotton's life in the country and criticizing life at court. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") believes this letter was possibly written by Donne.

Donne's statement that he does not need "others broad medows or woods" when he has a "convenient garden" as a metaphor for the idea that his own mind is fruitful enough that he does not need to read books to provide him with the thoughts of others has a strikingly parallel passage in a letter to Goodyer. In the letter to Goodyer Donne deprecates news of others instead of books:

> And thus long, Sir, whilst I have been talking of others, methinks I have opened a casement to gaze upon passengers which I love not much, though it might seem a recreation to such as who have their houses, that is themselves, so narrow and ill furnished, yet I can be content to look inwards upon myself, if

> for no other object, yet because I find your name and fortunes and contentment in the best room of me. . . . (Gosse II: 16: To Sir Henry Goodyer, 17 July 1613)

This letter is also characteristic of Donne in that it begins by stating that he reads little, yet he was reading a relatively obscure author (Dante) before he began writing this letter and spends a good portion of the letter discussing his reading.

11

S^{r}
if I had remembred y^{t} I should haue wanted y^{r} sight I would
not haue beene sick or at least I would not haue beene well by
so ill a meanes, as taking phiseck: for I am bound by making
my self loose. me thinks now y^{t} y^{ey} err wittyly w^{ch} teach that
saints see all mens actions in god as in a mirror. for I am sure
y^{t} if I were but glorified wth y^{r} sight I should gather many
particulars of carieres & altibaxos (as y^{t} fryer sayes) wherein fortunes
tumblers are exercised at & from y^{e} Court, for I hunger to
know who & why & when doth what. more then any thing else.
S^{r} I long to see y^{o} when I haue drunk one potion more
to my health & weakned my self I shalbee strong enough
to find y^{o} att Essex or rather then not at all at Court where
you shall find me (a miracle in y^{t} place) y^{r} honest frend.

Source: Burley MS., f. 294^{v}

Transcription Notes

l. 10 an undecipherable word is crossed out between S^{r} and I.

Closing What could be either a decorative flourish or initials (possibly I.D: or J.D:) occurs beneath the word "Frend" in the last line of this letter.

Notes

l. 4 This line could refer to the preceding sentence as well as the following one.

l. 5 carieres & altibaxos (as y^t fryer sayes): carieres. [career] 1534. From the French carriere: late Latin carraria (via) from carrus, wagon. (1) A race-course; the space within the barrier at a tournament; (2) Of a horse: A short gallop at full speed, a charge, an encounter. Hence, a swiftly running course as of the sun or a star through the heavens. By extension, a person's course or progress through life (O.E.D.).

Altibaxos is a form of altibajo, a downright blow in fencing. In the plural it is used to mean vicissitudes, the ups and downs in life (Velazquez, Spanish-English Dictionary) (Simpson, Prose Works 315). Perhaps the reference is to Friar Bacon, who was supposed to possess a glass that permitted him to see far-off or future events. See Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay by Robert Greene.

Commentary

Simpson comments that this letter "bears all the characteristic marks of Donne's style" and was probably written to Wotton in 1600. The letter shares references to the writer's own honesty and the scarcity of such a quality at court with letters on folio 296^v and 297 (BH Nos. 6 and 7). Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") is "very doubtful" that this letter could have been written by Donne. In my view, Simpson is correct. The reference to the writer's health is characteristic of Donne, as is the paradox that he is "bound" (housebound) by taking a laxative to make himself "loose." Donne mentions a similar problem in Letter 210.

12

S^{r}.

Only in obedience I send y^{o} some of my paradoxes; I loue y^{o} & myself
& them to well to send them willingly for they carry wth them
a confession of there lightnes. & y^{r} trouble & my shame. but
indeed they were made rather to deceaue tyme then her daughth^{r}
truth: although they haue beene written in an age when any
thing is strong enough to overthrow her: if they make y^{o} to
find better reasons against them they do there office: for they are
but swaggerers: quiet enough if y^{o} resist them. if perchaunce they
be pretyly guilt, y^{t} is there best for they are not hatcht: they are
rather alarums to truth to arme her then enemies: & they haue
only this advantadg to scape from being caled ill things y^{t} they are
nothings: therfore take heed of allowing any of them least y^{o} make
another. yet S^{r} though I know there low price except I receue by y^{r}
next lett^{r} an assurance vpon the religion of y^{r} frendship y^{t} no coppy
shalbee taken for any respect of these or any other my compositions
sent to y^{o}, I shall sinn against my conscience if I send y^{o} any more.
I speake y^{t} in playnes w^{ch} becomes (methinks) o^{r} honestyes; & therfore
call not this a distrustfull but a free spirit: I meane to aquaint
y^{o} wth all myne: and to my satyrs there belongs some feare &
to some elegies & these perhaps shame. against both w^{ch} affections
although I be tough enough yet I haue a ridling disposition to bee
ashamed of feare & afrayd of shame. therfore I am desirous
to hyde them wth out any over reconing of them or there maker.
but they are not worth thus much words in theyre disprayse.
I will step to a better subiect y^{r} last lett^{r} to w^{ch} I need not tell I
made no answere but I had need excuse it. all y^{r} lett^{r} I embrace
& beleeue it when it speakes of y^{r} self & when of me too if y^{e} good
words w^{ch} y^{o} speake of me bee ment of my intentions to goodnes: for
else alas! no man is more beggerly in actuall vertue then I.
I am sory y^{o} should (wth any great ernestnes) desyre any thing of
P Aretius not y^{t} he could infect; but y^{t} it seems y^{o} are alredy
infected wth the common opinion of him: beleeue me he is much lesse
then his fame & was to well payd by y^{e} Roman church in y^{t} coyne
w^{ch} he coveted most where his bookes were by the counsell of Trent
forbidden w^{ch} if they had beene permitted to haue beene worne by
all long ere this had beene worne out: his divinyty was but
a sirrops to enwrapp his prophane bookes [to] get them passage
yet in these bookes w^{ch} haue devine titles there is least harme
as in his letters most good his others haue no other
singularyty in them but that they are forbidden. the psalmes
(w^{ch} y^{o} aske) If I cannot shortly procure y^{o} one to poses I can
& will at any tyme borrow for you: In the meane tyme

> S^r haue the honor of forgiuing two faults togeather: my
> not writing last tyme and my abrupt ending now.

Source: Burley MS., ll. 1-39, f. 308^v; ll. 40-44, f. 309

Transcription Notes

This letter is followed by a space and then Donne's Paradoxes, beginning with 'That all things Kill themselves' etc."

l. 35 "sirrops": Simpson suggests that Donne probably wrote "sirrop." This could be the transcriber's error or what Donne actually wrote.

Notes

l. 4 "rather to deceaue tyme then her daughth^r truth": Simpson (Prose Works 316) cites Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae, lib. xii, c.xi: "Alius quidam veterum poetarum, cuius nomen mihi nunc memoria non est, veritatem temporis filiam esse dixit."

l. 17 playnes: plainness [plainly]

l. 23 reconing: reckoning

l. 32 P Aretius, i.e., Pietro Arentino (1492-1556), born at Arezzo, Italy. The author of five comedies and a tragedy as well as satires and other scandalous or licentious works. He is frequently mentioned by Elizabethan and later writers, usually as an example of depravity and sometimes as an example of Catholic and Italian licentiousness and corruption. Donne links Machiavelli, Aretino, and St. Ignatius as a "triangle of evil" in Ignatius his Conclave. See Items 161, 412, 819, and 820 in

John R. Roberts, _John Donne: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism 1968-1978_.

Commentary

The references in the letter to satires, elegies, and paradoxes, as well as the scribal note following the letter linking it with Donne's _Paradoxes_, indicate that without doubt this letter was written by Donne, probably to Wotton. Simpson, who takes this view, is supported by I. A. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters"), who accepts only this letter and two others as undoubtedly Donne's. Shapiro indicates that these are three isolated letters in the Burley MS. (See my discussion in the Textual Introduction for a different view). Simpson dates the letter about 1600 based on the references to the _Paradoxes_, most of which she believes were written while Donne was in the service of Egerton. The references to the _Satires_ and _Elegies_ would agree with this date, according to Grierson, since both the _Satires_ and most of the _Elegies_ belong to the same period (1593-99).

This letter, because it was one of the three in the Burley MS that have been accepted as unquestionably Donne's, is an important point of reference for the other letters in this MS. The letter indicates, among other things, that Donne discussed literature and theological matters with Wotton; that who wrote to whom last was a common topic of the letters; and that Donne's views of what he read were more critical than Wotton's. Donne mentions two ideas that appear again in different contexts in later letters. First, he describes his _Paradoxes_ as "nothings" to indicate their unimportance, an idea he later applies to himself during the period in his life in which he remained unemployed.

Second, he accepts Wotton's description of his virtue only as an exhortation, a description of the ideal virtue of which he is capable, not his actual state. Donne's early expression of this view adds credibility to his much-quoted defence of himself for writing "The Anniversaries": he tells George Garrard that he wrote about "such a person, as might be capable of all that I could say. If any of those Ladies [other ladies to whom Donne had written poems of praise] think that Mistris Drewry was not so, let that Lady make her self fit for all those praises in the book, and they shall be hers" (Letter No. 95, duplicated in Letter No. 92, which is dated 14 April 1612 [Continental Style]). Bald (Life 121-22) discusses Donne's reluctance to have his poetry circulated and the possible risk associated with having his poetry fall into unsympathetic hands. Bald's comments explain Donne's reluctance in this letter to permit Wotton to copy his poetry, and their appearance in the MSS. suggests how some of Donne's personal letters were preserved.

13

To my good friend G.H.
[Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
THE little businesse which you left in
my hands is now dispatched; if it
have hung longer then you thought, it
might serve for just excuse, that these small
things make as many steps to their end,
and need as many motions for the war_
rant, as much writing of the Clerks, as
long expectation of a Seal, as greater. It
comes now to you sealed, and with it as
strong and assured seals of my service and
love to you, if it be good enough for you.
I owe you a continuall tribute of Letters.
But Sir, even in Princes and Parents, and

> all States that have in them a naturall Soveraignty, there is a sort of reciprocation, and as descent to doe some offices due to them that serve them: which makes me look for Letters from you, because I have another as valuable a pawn therefore, as your friendship, which is your promise; lest by the Jailors fault this Letter stick long, I must tell you, that I writ and sent it 12° Decemb. 1600.
>
> Your friend and servant and lover
> J. Donne.
>
> 12. Decemb. 1600.

Source: Letters No. 72 (206-07)

Also in Gosse (I: 93)

Textual Notes

1. 16   as descent] a descent (compositor error)

Commentary

This is the earliest letter of those collected in the Letters. R. E. Bennett, in "Donne's Letters to Severall Persons of Honour," shows that the section of the Letters in which this letter occurs is composed entirely of letters to Sir Henry Goodyer (116-237) and suggests that the letter "could have been to Sir Henry Goodyer" (137). What business Donne was engaged in for the recipient is not known. The most interesting aspect of the letter is that in it Donne states that he must send this letter quickly "lest by the Jaylor's fault this Letter stick long." This may be meant to be taken humorously. Gosse (I: 93) does not consider Goodyer the recipient of the letter and treats Donne's declaration that he owes his correspondent "a continual tribute of letters" as "faintly sarcastic humour." If, however, Bennett is correct, as he probably is, Donne's declaration would be entirely consistent with his custom of writing a weekly letter to Goodyer.

1601

14

S^{r}.
In this sickly dotage of y^{e} world where vertue languisheth
in a banishment I must be glad shee hath found so holesome a
dwelling in y^{r} mind y^{t} dares not only harbor her, but avouch
it by y^{r} words & deeds. for it is as dangerous to haue vertue
in this world as it wilbe to haue wanted it in the next
& I am sure to find more sinners in heaven then honest men
vpon y^{e} earth. yet S^{r} y^{e} greatest harme y^{t} honesty doth y^{o}
is y^{t} it arests my iudgment & suffers it not to go forward to
consider y^{r} witt yo^{r} learnings & other worthineses.
because methinks I haue taken a ritch prize & made
a rare discouerie when I haue found an honest man:
& therfore whatsoever y^{o} haue more then honesty is
the wast & vnthriftynes of nature: I know it a fault
to commend a thing so much out of fashion as honesty yet
since I desire infinitely to contract a frendship wth you
(bycause I know how far y^{o} overstripp me in all other vertues)
I stand most vpon honesty wth w^{ch} I haue had most acquain-
taunce & society. I am best able to keepe wing wth y^{o} in it
though y^{o} sore high. I haue now red one letter from y^{o} since I
saw y^{o} & by it I see I should haue bee[n] glad of more: when
y^{o} think my letter or me worthy of offner salutations, write
& when one of y^{r} letters perisheth wthout answere & thanks
lett me forfeit you. I had almost condemned you of forgetting
me but y^{o} are saved by y^{r} booke. w^{ch} I will keep till it pleaseth
to dispose it otherwise. S^{r} in a long & well studied oration
no man shalbee able to commend to you an honester loue
then this galloping letter doth: & therfore till y^{e} next
commodity of sending let me here kisse y^{r} hand & vow to y^{w}
the observaunces of

y^{r} servant & lover.

Source: Burley MS., ll. 1-22, f. 298; ll. 23-30, f. 298^{v}

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Letters 317) dates this letter 1600 or 1601 because of its discussion of the lack of virtue at court, and suggests that the letter was addressed to an acquaintance of Wotton's with whom Donne wished to contract a friendship. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") regards this letter as possibly written by Donne. Perhaps this was an early letter to Goodyer: the figurative language of Donne's virtue trying to keep wing" with his correspondent's virtue which soars high might be related to Goodyer's love of hawking. It is quite conceivable that Donne's preoccupation with how to achieve virtue throughout his verse and prose letters to men and women arose out of the early letters which deplore the lack of virtue in the world and especially at court. Donne's opening sentence contains an idea similar to "A Nocturnall" and "The Anniversaries": that virtue has left the world, and that the world is consequently sick and dying. Donne speaks of virtue in two ways in this letter: first as a general quality, then as referring to specific moral qualities, in this case, honesty. See the discussion of Donne's treatment of virtue in the General Introduction.

1602

15

To the right wor: S^{r}
George More kt.

S^{r}

If a very respectiue feare of yo^{r} displeasure, and a doubt that my L: whom I know owt of yo^{r} worthines to loue yo^{w} much, would be so compassionate wth yo^{w}, as to add his anger to yo^{rs}, did not so much increase my sicknes as that I cannot stir I had taken the boldnes, to haue donne the office of this letter, by wayting vpon yo^{w} my self: To haue giuen yo^{w} truthe, and clearnes of this matter between yo^{r} daughter and me; and to show to yo^{w} plainly the limits of o^{r} fault, by w^{ch} I know yo^{r} wisdome wyll proportion the punishm^{t}. So long since, as at her being at york house, this had foundacion: and so much then of promise and Contract built vpon yt, as wthowt violence to Conscience might not be shaken. At her lying in town this last parliam^{t}, I found meanes to see her twice or thrice: we both knew the obligacions that lay vpon vs, and wee aduenturd equally, and about three weeks before Christmas we married. And as at the doinge, there were not vsd aboue fyue persons, of w^{ch} I protest to yo^{w} by my saluation, there was not one that $\overset{\text{had}}{\wedge}$ any dependence or relation to yo^{w}, so in all the passage of it, did I forbear to vse any such person, who by furtheringe of yt might violate any trust or duty towards yo^{w}. The reasons why I did not foreacquaint yo^{w} with it, (to deale wth the same plainnes that I haue vsd) were these. I knew my p^{r}sent estate lesse then fitt for her; I knew (yet I knew not why) that I stood not right in yo^{r} Opinion: I knew that to have giuen any intimacion of yt had been to impossibilitate the whole matt^{r}. And then hauing those $^{\text{honest}}$ purposes in o^{r} harts and those fetters in o^{r} Consciences, me thinks we should be pardoned, if o^{r} fault be but this, that wee did not by fore-reuealinge of yt, consent to o^{r} hindrance and torment. S^{r} I acknowledge my fault to be so great, as I dare scarse offer any other prayer to yo^{w} in myne own behalf, then this, to beleeve this truthe, that I neyth^{r} ioy in this lyfe, nor enioy the next) I humbly beg of yo^{w}, [that she may not, to her danger, feele the terror of yo^{r} sodaine anger. I know this letter shall find yo^{w} full of passion: but I know no passion can alter yo^{r} reason and wisdome; to w^{ch} I aduenture to commend these perticulers; That yt ys irremediably donne: That if yo^{w} incense my L, yo^{w} destroy her and me; That yt is $^{\text{easye}}$ to giue vs happiness; And that my Endevors and industrie, if it please yo^{w} to prosper them may soone make me somewhat worthyer of her. If any take the aduantage of yo^{r} displeasure against me, and fill yo^{w} wth ill thoughts of me, my Comfort is that yo^{w} know, that fayth and thanks are due to them onely, that speak when theyr informations might do good: w^{ch} now yt cannot work towards any party. for my Excuse I can say nothing except I knew, what were sayd to yo^{w}. S^{r}, I have truly told yo^{w} this matt^{r}, and I humbly beseeche yo^{w}, so to deale in yt, as the persuasions of Nature, reason, wisdome, and Christianity shall informe yo^{w};

And to accept the vowes, of one whom yo^{w} may now rayse or
scatter, w^{ch} are, that as all my loue ys directed vnchange-
ably vpon her, so all my labors shall concur to her con-
tentment, and $\overset{\text{to}}{\wedge}$ show my humble obedienc[e] to yo^{r} selfe.
from my lodginge by y^{e}
Sauoy. 2^{o} Februa: i60i

Yo^{rs} in all duty and
humblenes
J: DONNE

Source: Folger MS. L.b. 526 (Beal, No. 1)

Other transcriptions: Loseley MSS. (328-30)

Gosse (I: 100-02

Textual Notes

1. 28 "of" is inserted above the line.

Commentary

This letter is the first of eight written by Donne concerning the effects of his secret marriage to Anne More. Four were written to Sir George More and four to Sir Thomas Egerton. Sir George More, Donne's unwilling father-in-law, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1597 and inherited the family estate of Loseley Park, near Guildford in 1600. He was wealthy and maintained a large establishment. His social standing was much higher than Donne's, and all of his other daughters married country gentlemen of wealth and position. He also had public ambitions. He was active in local affairs and was a member of every parliament from 1584 onwards until his death. He held several important positions under James but never achieved the higher offices to which he aspired. Sir Thomas Egerton was the Lord Keeper, the highest legal official in England. Donne was one of three secretaries employed by Egerton, Sir George More's brother-in-law. Egerton's marriage to Sir George More's sister, Elizabeth, was the second for both of them; both had been widowed. Egerton had three adult children; she a son, Francis Wolley, who had been brought up with Sir George More's children because of his mother's constant attendance at court. In return, Lady Egerton was raising Sir George More's daughter Anne, who went to live in Egerton's household at York House at about the age of fourteen. For both parties the marriage was one of social advantages; nevertheless, it turned into an affectionate one.

In this letter, perhaps one of the most famous of all Donne's letters, Donne announces his secret marriage to Anne More to her father. According to Walton, the letter was written two months after the marriage and delivered for Donne (who was sick in his chambers in London) by the 9th Earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy, a neighbor and friend of Sir George More's whose social position might be expected to soften the news. Donne's connection with Henry Percy is not known. Bald (Life 133) conjectures two possibilities. Percy was a patron of poets and man of science and may have become friendly with Donne because of his writing; a second possibility is that they met through Essex. Percy was a friend of Essex's during the period that Donne was in Essex's service. Percy's rank and friendship with Sir George More did not affect Sir George More's reception of the news. He was furious and immediately took steps to have Donne dismissed by Egerton and the marriage annulled. Donne's letters to Egerton and More are thus concerned with two issues: first, having his marriage accepted and, second, being reinstated in his position. Donne achieved the first but not the second.

Donne's crucial first letter to Sir George More was not suited to quieting the anger of a quick-tempered man, as More was known to be, and as Donne's letter implies. Donne insists throughout the letter on justifying his conduct for the idea of the marriage itself, for not asking More's permission, and even for the way the secret marriage was carried out. As well, Donne states that he and Anne "aduenturd equally" despite the fact that he was twenty-nine and she a minor of seventeen. The letter also contains repeated insistences that the marriage was irrevocable and attempts to undo it would only harm Anne More. The letter shows signs of Donne's nervousness through its lack of cohesive organization, the amount of repetition, and Donne's antagonistic defensiveness. The letter was written from Donne's lodgings in the house of a Mr. Haines by the Savoy. The Savoy at this time was divided into tenements and was a fashionable address for people who did not own their own townhouses. It had originally been a hospital and its precincts were still a "liberty" free from the ordinary civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Later in the century it became notorious for its clandestine marriages. Bald (Life 128) suggests that Donne's marriage to Anne More took place there.

16

To the right wor^{pll}:
S^{r} George More
knight.

S^{r}

The inward accusacions in my Conscience, that I haue offended
yo^{w}, beyond any ability of redeeming yt by me, and the feeling
of my Lords heauy displeasure, following yt, forceth me to wright
though I know my fault make my letters very vngracious to yo^{w}.
Allmighty God whom I call to witnesse that all my griefe
ys that I haue in this manner offended yo^{w}, and him direct
yo^{w} to beleeve, that w^{ch} owt of an humble and afflicted hart
I now wright to yo^{w}. And since we haue no meanes to move

God, when ~~we~~ he wyll not hear o^{r} prayers to hear them, but by prayeng, I humbly beseech yo^{w}, to allow by his gracious example, my penitence so good Entertainment, as yt may haue a beeleife, and a pittie. Of nothinge in this one fault, that I hear sayd to me can I disculpe myselfe, but of the contemtuous and despightfull purpose towards yo^{w}, w^{ch} I hear ys surmised against me. But for my dutifull regard to my late Lady, for my Religion, and for my lyfe, I refer my selfe to them, that may haue observd them. I humble besee^{c}he yo^{w}, to take of these waytes, and to put my fault into the balance alone, as yt was donne, wthowt the addicon of these yll reports: And though then yt wyll be to heauy for me, yett then yt wyll less greiue yo^{w} to pardon yt. How litle and how short the comfort and pleasure of destroyeng ys, I know yo^{r} wisdome and Religion informs yo^{w}. And though perchance yo^{w} intend not utter destruction, yett the way through w^{ch} I fall towards yt, ys so headlong, that beeing thus pushd, I shall soone be at bottome. for yt pleaseth God, from whom I acknowledge the punishment to be iust, to accompany my other ylls, wth so much sicknes as I haue no refuge, but that of Mercy, w^{ch} I beg, of of him, my L:, and yo^{w}. w^{ch} I hope yo^{w} wyll not repent to haue afforded me, since all my Endevors, and the whole course of my lyfe shalbe bent, to make my selfe worthy of ~~her~~ yo^{r} fauor, and her loue, whose peace of Conscience, and quiett, I know must be much wounded and violencd, if yo^{r} displeasure sever us. I can p^{r}sent nothing to yo^{r} thoughts, w^{ch} yo^{w} knew not before, but my submission, my repentance, and my harty desire to do any thing satisfactory to yo^{ur} iust displeasure: of wch I beseech yo^{w} to make a charitable vse and Construction . from the fleete: ii^{o} Febr: i60i

Yo^{rs} in all faythfull Duty
and obedience.
J: DONNE.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 527 (Beal, No. 2)

Other transcriptions: Loseley MSS. (330-32)

Gosse (I: 104-05)

Textual Notes

l. 33 yo^{r}: The r was in superscript in Donne's original.

Commentary

This letter follows by nine days Donne's first letter to Sir George More breaking the news of his secret marriage to Anne More. In the interim Donne and two of his friends (Christopher and Samuel Brooke) who participated in the wedding were arrested and jailed in various prisons for an offence against canon law. This, Donne's second letter, is much more conciliatory than his first. He attempts to defend himself only against attacks on his character and life not the fault of his marriage. Donne's letter indicates that he has been criticized for his religion and his moral conduct (in a later letter he discusses allegations about his debts and relations with other women). Donne's reference to "my late Lady," is to his wife Anne, who has just lately become his lady.

Donne is more in command of this letter and develops his ideas in a more typical fashion. He decorates his letter by using two different analogies, one secular, one religious, to describe his request for forgiveness, both designed to flatter Sir George. Both analogies deal with the same subject: judgement. Donne's religious analogy compares his letter to Sir George More to a Christian's prayers to God. God (Sir George) may refuse to hear them. The second analogy is from the law. Donne suggests that the scales (of justice) show the weight of his offence but asks that no other faults (no additional weights) be attached to him and asks Sir George to pardon him. Donne develops this second conceit in typical fashion. He associates the weight of his offense with a heavy object which falls and Sir George More's judgement with the possibility of destruction. Hence he asks Sir George not to "push" him so that he "falls" to his destruction. Sir George More refused to respond to this letter and referred Donne to Sir Thomas Egerton.

17

[To Sir Thomas Egerton?]

I send to y^{o} now y^{t} I may know how I do bycause vppon y^{r} opinion of
me all I depend: for though I be troubled wth the extremyty of such
a sicknes as deserues att lest pitty if not loue yet I were as good
to send to a coniurer for a good fortune as to a phisition for
health. indeed I am oprest wth such a sadnes as I am glad of nothing
but that I am oprest wth it: if it had pleased y^{o} to haue norisht
& brought vpp so much loue in y^{r} brest as y^{o} haue done greife
perchaunce I should haue ~~had~~ as much loue in y^{r} service as I haue done
greif: yet I should accompt even sorrow good payment if by
myne y^{rs} were lessoned: now I vene & vrge my body wth phisick
when my desperat mind is sick as they batter citty walls when
the cittizens are stobborne: but by all this labor of my penn
my mind is no more comforted then a condemned prisoner would
bee to see his chamber swypte & made cleane: only y^{o} know wheth^{r}
ever I shalbee better & only y^{o} can tell me (for y^{o} are my
destyny) whether I were best to dy now, or endevor to liue
& keep y^{e} great honor of being

y^{r} servant.

Source: Burley MS., f. 299^{v}

Transcription Notes

l. 10 vene: poison? let blood? See "venal," *O.E.D.*

Commentary

Simpson (*Prose Works* 319) suggests that this letter was written in February 1601/2 when Donne was in disgrace over his secret marriage to Anne More and was sick and imprisoned in the Fleet Prison. As Simpson notes, this letter is similar to those letters to both Sir Thomas Egerton and Sir George More in that Donne complains about his illness and asserts his fate is in the recipient's hands. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") is "very doubtful" that this letter was written by Donne, although he gives no reasons for this view.

The military imagery comparing battering walls during the siege of a city with the effect of a conflict (the battering) on the mind (the city) of the writer is also used by Donne in Holy Sonnet Number Ten: "Batter my heart, three person'd God." Moreover, Donne often chooses his imagery because of its relationship to the circumstances surrounding the letter. Because of his secret marriage, Donne was first confined to Fleet Prison, then allowed to stay under house arrest in his own chambers, and finally "to take the ayre" in London. Donne's comparing his mind to a prison is a technique he uses in other letters relating to his marriage, imprisonment, and dismissal from Egerton's service. Donne's first letters to Sir George More and Sir Thomas Egerton do not show real concern on the part of Donne for his actions. It took Donne over a week to realize that he had made a serious mistake. This letter indicates an awareness of the serious nature of the situation. The letter may have been written around 11 February to Sir Thomas Egerton because it expresses the desperate submission first found in Donne's letter to Sir George More of that date and states that Donne has been in the service of his correspondent. Donne was, of course, dismissed from Egerton's service because of his marriage.

18

To the right honorable
my very good L: and
Master, S^{r} Thomas
Egerton knight; L: keeper
of the great Seale of
England.

To excuse my Offence, or so much to resist the iust punishm^{t}
for ytt, as to moue yo^{r} Lp to wthdraw ytt, I thought till now,

were to aggrauate my fault. But since yt hath pleasd God, to
ioyne wth yo^{w} in punishing therof, wth increasing my sicknes, and
that he giues me now Audience by prayer, yt emboldneth me
also to address my humble request to yo^{r} Lp: that yo^{w} would
admit into yo^{r} fauorable Consideracon, how farr my intenti-
ons were from doing dishonor to yo^{r} Lordships house; and how
unable I ame to escape vtter and present destruction if
yo^{r} Lp iudge onely the Effect and deede. My seruices neuer
had so much worthe in them, as to deserve the fauors,
wherwth they were payd: But they had alwayes so much
honesty, as that onely this, hath staynd them. Yo^{r} Justice
hath been Mercifull, in making me know my offence, and yt
hath much profited me, that I ame deiected. Since then
I ame so intirely yo^{rs}, that euen yo^{r} disfauors haue wrought
good upon me, I humbly beseeche yo^{w} that all my good
may proceed from yo^{r} Lordship. And that, since S^{r} George
More, whom I leaue no humble way unsought, to regaine,
referrs all to yo^{r} Lordship, yo^{w} would be pleasd to lessen that
Correction, w^{ch} yo^{r} iust wisdome hath destind for me; and
so to pitty my sicknes, and other Misery, as shall best
agree wth yo^{r} honorable disposition. Allmighty god
accompany all yo^{r} Lordships purposes, and bless yo^{w} and yo^{rs} wth
many good dayes. Fleet. i2^{o} Febr: i60i

Yo^{r} Lordships
most deiected and poorest
Seruant
J. DONNE.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 528 (Beal, No. 3)

Other transcriptions: *Loseley MSS*. (332-33)

Gosse (I: 105-06)

Commentary

Following an immediate response from Sir George More to Donne's letter of 11 February in which More states that Donne's fate is in the hands of Lord Egerton (the Lord Keeper and Donne's employer), Donne writes on the following day asking Egerton to have pity on his sickness and lessen his punishment (by which he means let him out of Fleet Prison). Donne continues with the parallel he has drawn between heavenly and earthly judgement in his letter the day before to Sir George More. He suggests that God has joined with Egerton in punishing him: Egerton has imprisoned him; God has increased his sickness. Donne proceeds to reverse this analogy by suggesting that Egerton should join God in ameliorating Donne's position because Donne assures Egerton God will **now** hear Donne's prayers. This perhaps indicates an optimistic interpretation on Donne's part of Sir George More's intention in leaving Donne's fate in Egerton's hands.

19

To the right wor:^{fll}
S^{r} George More knight:

S^{r}
From yo^{w} whom next to God, I shall owe my health, by enioyeng by yo^{r} Mediacion
[this
mild change of Imprisonment, I desire to deriue all my good fortune and Content in
this world. And therfore wth my most unfeyned thanks, p^{r}sent to yo^{w} my humble
peticion that yo^{w} would be pleasd to hope, that as that fault w^{ch} was sayd to
me of hauing deceiud some gentlewomen before, and that of louing a Corrupt
Religion are vanishd and smoakd away (as I assure myself, owt of theyr weaknes
they are And that as the Deuyll in the Article of o^{r} death takes the aduan-
tage of o^{r} weaknes and fear to aggrauate o^{r} Sinns to o^{r} Conscience, so some un-
charitable Malice hath presented my debts doble at least, So, many of the
Imputacions layd vpon me would fall of, if I might but shake and purge my
self in yo^{r} p^{r}sence. But if that were donne, of this offence committed to yo^{w}
I cannot acquit my self. Of w^{ch} yet I hope that God to whom for that
I hartily direct many prayers wyll informe yo^{w} to make that vse, that as
of Euyll Manners good Lawes growe, so owt of o^{r} disobedience and boldnes,
yo^{w} wyll take Occasion to show Mercy and tendernes. And when yt shall
please ^{god} ~~yo^{w}~~ to soften yo^{r} hart so much towards vs as to pardon vs, I beseech
yo^{w} allso to vndertake that charitable office of beeing my Mediator to my
L: whom as vpon yo^{r} iust Complaint yo^{w} found full of iustice, I doubt not
but yo^{w} shall also find full of mercy for so ys the Almighty pattern of
Justice and Mercy, equally full of bothe. My conscience and such Affec-
tion as in my Conscience becomes an honest man emboldneth me to make
one request more, w^{ch} ys that by some kind and Comfortable message yo^{w}
would be pleasd to giue some ease of the afflictions w^{ch} I know yo^{r}
daughter in her Mind suffers; and that (if it be not against yo^{r} other
purposes) I may wth yo^{r} leaue wright to her, for wthout yo^{r} leaue
I wyll neuer attempt any thing concerning her. God so haue mercy
vpon me as I ame vnchangeably resolud, to bend all my Courses to make
me fitt for her; w^{ch} if God, and my L: and yo^{w} be pleasd to strengthen
I hope neyther my debts w^{ch} I can easily order, nor any thing els shall

interrupt. Allmighty god keepe yo^{w} in his fauor and restore me to his and yo^{rs}. from my Chamber, whether by yo^{r} fauor I ame Come. 13^{o}

Feb. 1601

Yo^{rs} in all dutiful obedience
J. DONNE.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 529 (Beal No. 4)

Other transcriptions: Loseley MSS. (334-35)

Gosse (I: 106-07)

Commentary

In this, Donne's third letter to Sir George More concerning his secret marriage to Anne More, he thanks Sir George More for mediating his release from Fleet Prison. It is unlikely that Sir George More did so, but Donne is anxious to establish better relations with him. Donne makes several references to his previous letter to Sir George and takes much the same line: he admits guilt and asks for pardon because of the marriage and defends himself against other faults attributed to him. In this letter Donne defends himself against some specific charges that Sir George has heard against him: "of deceiuing some gentlewomen before," of "louing a Corrupt Religion," and of being seriously in debt. Donne goes one step further in this letter than in the previous one and asks permission to write to Anne. Donne's rhetorical techniques in this letter continue those used in the previous letters: he repeats the use of conceits from religion and law. In this letter the religious conceit is Donne's comparison of the malicious way people have portrayed him to Sir George More with the way the devil takes advantage of people who are dying (like Donne, they are at a disadvantage) to make their sins appear worse to them than they are. The conceit from law is that wicked acts ("Euil Manners") produce good laws to curb them, just as Donne's disobedience and boldness produce the occasion for "mercy and tenderness."

20

To the right honorable
my very good L: and
Master, S^{r} Thomas
Egerton knight; L: keeper
of the great Seale
of England

Onely in that Coyne wherin they that delight to do benefitts, and good turnes for the works sake, loue to be payd, ame I riche, w^{ch} ys thankfullnes; w^{ch} I humbly and abundantly p^{r}sent to yo^{r} Lp. Beseeching yo^{w}, to giue such way and Entertainmt to this vertu of mercy, w^{ch} ys allways in yo^{w}, and allwayes awake, that yt may so soften yo^{w}, that as yt hath wrought for me, the best of bodily blessings, w^{ch} ys, this way to Health, So yt may gaine my Mind her cheife Comfort, w^{ch} ys yo^{r} pardon for ^{my} ~~yt~~ bold and p^{r}sumtuous offence. All-mighty god be all wayes so wth yo^{w} in this world, as yo^{w} may be sure to be wth him in the next. i3^{o} Feb: 160i

Yo^{r} Lordships
poore and repentant
servant
J: DONNE.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 530 (Beal No. 5)

Other transcriptions: *Loseley MSS*. (336)

Gosse (I: 107-08)

Commentary

This letter to Egerton, Donne's second after his secret marriage to Anne More, was written the same day as Donne's third letter to Sir George More. Donne thanks both men for his release from prison and asks both for their pardon. The letter to Egerton, however, is much briefer than the letter to Sir George More, and in it Donne uses different imagery.

Whereas in his letter to Sir George More Donne uses conceits taken from religion and law, in this letter he generalizes about the nature of those who do good works for their own sake and states he can only thank Egerton by repaying his kindness with gratitude. Donne discusses the different comforts of body and mind. The chief comfort of the body is health, which Donne has achieved by being released from prison. The chief comfort of the mind would be Egerton's pardon, which Donne has earlier implied he can repay only with more gratitude.

21

[To Sir Robert Cotton]

S^{r} I send yo^{w} back by this bearer
the letter w^{ch} I borrowd of yo^{w}. If yo^{w} wyll
now to ease my imprisonment spare me some of
the french negotiacions, yo^{w} shall haue them
as faythfully kept, and as orderly returnd as
these: And when I ame worth yo^{r} Commandinge
I ame wholy yo^{rs}: fro$\underline{m}$ my prison in my
Chamber: 20 Febru: i60i
yo^{r} honest assured frind
J: DONNE

Source: British Library, Cotton MS Julius C.III, f. 153 (Beal No. 7)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (I: 109)

Commentary

This letter helps fix the length of Donne's confinement to his lodging and suggests the approximate date for another letter from Donne to Cotton (Beal No. 10), Cotton MS Cleopatra F. VII. The French negotiations probably refer to the conflict over diplomatic precedence between France and Spain that Donne discusses in a later letter to

Cotton, in which he analyzes *De dignitate regum regnorumque Hispaniae, et honoratiori loco eis, seu eorum legatis, a conciliis ac Romana sede jure debito* written by Don Diego de Valdez (Jacobus Valdesius) in 1600 and published in Madrid in 1602. The book is still in the Cotton library with a letter by Donne (No. 26 in this edition) bound in it (Bald, *Life* 202).

22

To the right honorable
my very good Lord and
Master, S^{r} Thomas Eger-
ton knight, L: keeper of
the great Seale of
England.

The honorable fauor that yo^{r} L*ordship* afforded me in allowinge me the liberty of myne own Chamber, hath giuen me leaue so much to respect and loue my self, that now I can desire to be well. And therfore, for health not pleasure (of w^{ch} yo^{r} L*ordships* displeasure hath dulld in me all tast and apprehension) I humbly beseeche yo^{r} L*ordship*, much more to slacken my fetters, that as I ame by yo^{r} L*ordships* fauor, myne own keeper, and Surety, so I may be myne owne phisician and Apothecary: w^{ch} yo^{r} L*ordship* shall worke, yt yo^{w} graunt me liberty to take the Ayre, about this Towne. The whole world ys a streight Imprisonm^{t} to me, whilst I am barrd yo^{r} L*ordships* sight. but this fauor may lengthen and better my lyfe, w^{ch} I desire to p^{r}serve, onely in hope to redeeme by my sorrowe, and desire to do yo^{r} L*ordship* Seruice, my offence past. Allmighty god dwell euer in yo^{r} L*ordships* hart, and fill yt wth good desires, and graunt them.

Yo^{r} L*ordships*
poorest seruant
[no signature or date]

Source: Folger MS L.b. 534 (Beal No. 6)

Other transcriptions: *Loseley MSS*. (343-44)

Commentary

Beal tentatively dates this letter February 13 1601/2, the same date as Donne's letter which thanks Egerton for releasing him from Fleet Prison. In the Loseley MSS., Kempe places this letter after two letters written in March, one dated with the month only, the other dated March 1. Bald (Life 136) dates the letter a "few days later" than 13 February. Bald must be the closest here. This undated letter must have been written later than 13 February because the letter of that date was written immediately after Donne's release from prison, whereas this letter contains a reference to the positive effect on Donne's health that being back in his own chamber has had. This undated letter must, however, precede the letter dated 1 March written to Egerton. In this letter Donne asks Egerton's permission for "liberty to take the ayre," while in the 1 March letter Donne asks for forgiveness and reinstatement in his position. Moreover, Donne's letter to Robert Cotton dated 20 February indicates that Donne is still confined to his chamber at that time, while a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer indicates that by 23 February Donne was at liberty again. The undated letter was thus probably written around the end of the third week in February. Donne continues to develop conceits about his health in this letter which are introduced in his previous letter. He says his taking the ayre will permit him to become his own physician and apothecary. He will also be his own keeper and surety. Did Egerton appreciate this cleverness?

23

[To Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

Of my selfe, (who, if honesty were precious, were worth
the talking of) let me say a little. The Commissoners by Imprisoning
the wittnesses and Excomunicating all vs have implicitlio,
iustified our Marriage: S^{r} George will as I heare keepe
her till I send for her: and let her remayne there yett, his
good nature and her sorrow will worke somethinge.
I have liberty to ride abrode and feele not much of an
imprisonment. for my retorne to my L: and S^{r} George
his pacification, you know my meanes and therefore
my hopes. Of Ostend. It is said there hath been a
new blow given. Losses of men somewhat equall, but the
Enemy hath recovered a trench w^{ch} S^{r} Fr: helde
out of the Towne. The States have honored him by publishinge
an Edict wth sharpe punnishment to any that speke dishonorably
of his parly wth the Arch D: If the Emperor were dead
before you wente perchance he is buryed by this tyme. I hope
sombody els hath had the yll luck to tell you first, that
the yonge Bedford is dead. The K: of Spaine intends
to spend this somer in Italy: And there I thinke by
that tyme wilbe o^{r} Lords of Penbroke, Wylloughby and
Worster. The Lo: Deputy hath cut off some of Tyrrells
now lately but no greate number. I send this Letter to aske
the waygh to Polesworth: If I heare it finde it, I shall
cost you halfe an howre a weeke to reade the rest. I heare
nothing of yo^{r} warrant fro M^{r} Andr: Loo: Take my
love and honesty into the good opinion and commend my
poore unworthie thanks and service to yo^{r} good Lady:
23^{o} Febr: 1601: from my chamber at Mr. Haines his
house by the Sauoye (for this Language yo^{r} supscriptions
use)

Yo^{r} true & certayne frinde,
JO: DONNE:

Source: St. Paul's Cathedral (Anderdon MSS.); also in Gosse (I: 109-10)

Textual Notes

This is one of the letters from the "Anderdon MSS," as Gosse describes them. They are copies of five of Donne's letters on two folio leaves originally conjoined. One leaf of this MS formerly owned by Miss Mary Donne of Chester is now at St. Paul's Cathedral (Donne file in safe) (Beal 244). The letters on this sheet are Gosse I: 109, II: 16, and

II: 206. The other leaf, in the collection of Roger Barrett of Chicago, contains Gosse I: 309-10 and II: 33. See the Textual Introduction for more information.

Commentary

This letter also has to do with Donne's marriage. Sir George More had initiated proceedings before the High Commission to have the marriage between his daughter and Donne annulled. By this point Donne had been released from prison and subsequent confinement to his lodgings and was optimistic that he would be reinstated in his position as Sir Thomas Egerton's secretary (the "return to my Lord") and accepted by Sir George More as a son-in-law ("Sir George's pacification"). Donne's statement that Goodyer knows his "means" and therefore his "hopes" implies that Donne has good reasons to be optimistic, but Donne's letters to Egerton and More rely entirely on appeals to their good natures.

Donne's international news concerns the war between the Spanish Netherlands and Spain.

The "young Bedford" Donne refers to was the Countess of Bedford's infant son John (Bald, Life 172). The "Lords of Pembroke, Willoughby, and Worcester" were public figures but may have had special interest for Donne. The Earl of Pembroke was William Herbert (1580-1630), the third Earl. Donne's son edited the poems of the Earl of Pembroke and claimed to be descended from the Herberts in the dedicatory epistle. Donne believed himself descended from the Dwns of Kidwelly in Wales; the Dwns and the Herberts were closely allied during the Wars of the Roses (Bald, Life 20). Donne, of course, was a close friend of Magdalen Herbert and her sons George Herbert and Sir Edward Herbert, and was also friendly with Philip Herbert, the 4th Earl of Pembroke and 1st Earl of Montgomery. See Letter No. 164. The Earl of Worcester was Edward Somerset (1553-1628), the second Somerset Earl of Worcester. Worcester escorted the Earl of Essex to York House in late 1599, where he was to be kept under house arrest. Donne probably met Worcester at that time. Worcester was the Master of the Horse under Elizabeth, and re-appointed to that position under James; as such he was the chief officer out-of-doors responsible for the royal stables and coaches and care of the horses (Akrigg 26). Worcester was for a time James's favorite and later in the reign was made Lord Privy Seal. Lord Willoughby was Robert Bertie, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, who was one of the commanders of the English soldiers sent to serve under Dutch command in 1624, after Buckingham and Charles had given up on the Spanish match and allied themselves with the Dutch, in the hope of regaining the Palatinate for Frederick through the alliance (Akrigg 387). The "Lord-Deputy" refers to Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, who succeeded Essex as Deputy, and who successfully completed the reconquest of Ireland by 1603.

24

To the right worshipfull
S^{r} George More: knight

S^{r}

If I could fear, y^{t} in so much worthynes as ys in yo^{w}, there were no Mercy,
or yf these waights opprest onely my shoulders, and my fortunes, and not my
conscience, and hers whose good ys dearer to me by much then my lyfe, I
should not thus troble yo^{w} wth my lo$\underline{s}$s. But when I see that this storme
hath shakd me at roote in my Lords fauor, wher I was well planted,
and haue iust reason to fear, that those yll reports w^{ch} malice hath
raysd of me, may haue trobled her, I can leaue no honest way untryed
to remedy these miseryes, nor find any way more honest then this, owt
of an humble and repentant hart, for the fault donne to yo^{w}, to beg

both yo^{r} pardon and assistance in my suite to my L. I should wrong yo^{w} as much againe, as I did, if I should think yo^{w} sought to destroy me. but though I be not hedlongly destroyd, I languish, and rust dangerously. from seeking p^{r}fermts abrode, my loue and conscience restraines me. from hoping for them here, my Lords disgracings cut me of. My Em prisonmt^{s}, and theyrs whose loue to me brought them to yt hath already cost me 40^{l}. And the loue of my frinds, though yt be not vtterly grownded vpon my fortunes, yet I know suffers somewhat, in these long and uncertain disgraces of myne. I therfore humbly beseech yo^{w}, to haue so charitable a pitty, of what I have, and do, and must suffer, as to take to yo^{r}selfe the Comfort, of hauing saved from such destruction, as yo^{r} iust Anger might haue layd vpo: him a sorowfull and honest man I was bold in my last letter to beg leaue of yo^{w}, that I might wright to yo^{r} daughter. Though I understood therupon, that after the Thursday yo^{w} were not displeasd that I should, yet I haue not nor wyll not wthowt yo^{r} knowledge do yt. But now I beseech yo^{w} that I may; since I protest before god, yt is the greatest of my afflictions, not to do yt. In all the world ys not more true sorrow then in my hart, nor more understanding of true repentance, then in yo^{rs}. And therfore God, whose pardon in such cases ys never denyed, giues me leaue to hope, that yo^{w} wyll fauorably consider my necessityes. To his mercifull guiding, and protection I commend yo^{w} and cease to trouble yo^{w}. 1^{o} Mart: i60i

yo^{rs} in all humblenes
and dutifull obedience
J. DONNE

Source: Folger MS L.b. 532 (Beal No. 8)

Other transcriptions: *Loseley MSS*. (339-40)

Gosse (I: 112-14)

Commentary

Donne continues to use the imagery of the earlier letters intermittently. His cares, not his faults, are now the weights on his shoulders, and he no longer is falling headlong: "I be not hedlongly destroyd." New imagery suggests Donne's abject repentance by suggesting his passivity. He implies he is a plant rooted in Egerton's favor and a tool that languishes and rusts dangerously from lack of use. This imagery supports Donne's request for a pardon from Sir George More without which, he says, he will not attempt to regain employment nor will he write to Anne More. Donne's passive acceptance of his fate causes him to refuse to write to Anne without written consent despite an indirect communication that Sir George More would now permit it.

25

To the right honorable
my very good L: and
Master S^{r} Thomas Eger-
ton knight, L: keeper of
the great Seal of En-
gland.

That offence w^{ch} was to god in this Matter, his Mercy hath assurd my Consciensce, ys pardoned. The Commissioners who minister his Anger and Mercy incline also to remitt yt. S^{r} George More of whose learning and wisdome, I haue good knowledge, and therfor good hope of his moderacion, hath sayd, before his last goinge yt he was so far from being any Cause or mouer of my punishment or disgrace that if yt fitted his reputacion, he would be a sutor to yo^{r} Lordship my restoringe. All these Irons are knocd of; yett I perish in as heavy fetters as ever, whilst I languish under y^{r} Lps Anger. How soone my History is dispatchd. I was carefully and honestly bred; enioyd an indifferent fortune; I had, (and I had understandinge 'nough to valew yt) the sweetnes and security of a freedome and indepency; wthowt markinge owt to my hopes, any place of profitt, I had a desire to be yo^{r} Lordships seruant; by the fauor w^{ch} yo^{r} good sonnes loue to me, obtaind. I was 4 years yo^{r} Lordships Secretary, not dishonest, nor greedy. The sicknes of w^{ch} I dyed, ys, that I begonne in yo^{r} Lordships house, y^{is} loue. Wher I shalbe buried, I know not. It ys late now, for me (but y^{t} Necessity, as yt hath continually an Autumne and a wytheringe so yt hath euer a springe and must put forthe, I to beginne that Course, w^{ch} some years past, I purposd, to trauaile though I could now do yt, not much disaduantadgeably. But I haue some bridles vpon me now, more then them by my Marriage of this gentlewoman: in prouiding for whom, I can and wyll show my self very honest, though not so fortunate. To seek p^{r}ferm^{t} here, wth any but yo^{r} Lordship were a madnes. Euery great Man, to whom I shall address any such suite, wyll silently dispute the Case, and say, would my L: keeper so disgraciously haue imprisond him, and flung him away, if he had not donne some other great fault, of w^{ch} wee hear most? So that to the burden of my true weaknesses, I shall haue this Addicion, of a very p^{r}eiudiciall suspicion, that I ame worse, then I hope yo^{r} Lordship dothe think me, or would that the world should thinke. I haue therfore no way before me; but must turn back to yo^{r} Lordship, who

knowes, that Redemtion was no less worke then Creation. I know
my fault so well, and so well acknowledge yt, that I protest
I haue not so much as inwardly grudgd nor started at the
punishmnt. I know yo^{r} Lordships disposicion so well as though in course
of Justice, yt be of proofe against clamors of offendors yet yt
ys not strong inough to resist yt selfe, and I know yt selfe
naturally enclines yt to pitty. I know myne own Necessity
owt of w^{ch} I humbly beg that yo^{r} Lordship wyll so much entender yo^{r}
hart towards me, as to give me leaue to come into yo^{r} p^{r}sence.
Affliction, Misery, and Destruction are not there; and euery
where els, wher I ame they are. I^{o} Mart ii i60i

Yo^{E} Lordships
most poore and
most penitent
Seruant
J: DONNE.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 533 (Beal No. 9)

Other transcriptions: Loseley MSS. (341-43)

Gosse (I: 114-15)

Transcription Notes

Closing] Yo^{E}: Donne apparently means Yo^{r} but ends with the E as an abbreviation sign instead of superscript r.

Commentary

This is the last of the letters written to Egerton by Donne about his marriage and dismissal. Donne resumed his freedom though not his position as Egerton's secretary, and progressed towards having his marriage to Anne Donne recognized as legally binding. After succeeding in his earlier requests first, to be freed from prison and then to be allowed to take the air in London, Donne likely anticipated being successfully reinstated as Egerton's secretary. Donne's opening statement in this letter (that God had pardoned him) shows a returning optimism. Egerton declined to reinstate Donne, however, despite the urging of Sir George More. Egerton responded to these requests, stating "that though he was unfeignedly sorry for what he had done, it was yet inconsistent with his place and credit to discharge and re-admit servants at the request of passionate petitioners" (Gosse I: 116). No further letters from Donne to Egerton referring to the matter have been found.

There is continuity to Donne's use of imagery in his letters in this matter to both Sir George More and Sir Thomas Egerton. In Donne's second letter to Sir George More he compares writing to him with praying to God, and throughout the correspondence to both men Donne's reports of God's responses to his prayers reflect the earthly responses of Egerton and More to his marriage. In this letter, as part of his conclusion, Donne compares Egerton to God: both are capable of redemption as well as creation. Donne also metaphorically describes Egerton's displeasure as "heavy fetters," a metaphor in keeping with Donne's actual experience of imprisonment.

One final conceit in this letter is of interest because of its relationship to Donne's poetry. Donne describes himself as having been sick and now being dead but not yet buried. Donne uses this comparison of the loss of Egerton's favor with being dead eleven years later in his final two verse letters to the Countess of Bedford when he has lost her favor. Moreover, Donne attempts, in both cases, to link his "death" with the cyclical aspect of nature, which, to him, if not to his patrons, suggests the possibility of a regeneration of their relationship.

26

To my honored frinde
Sir Robert Cotton [1602]

S^{r}
I have read Valdesius whom yo^{w} sent me, wth much delight as well because the
[question
is important, as perplexd. He ys extremely full of Autorities, and Citations,
[as almost euery
spaniard ys, and Euery lawyer. But all hys Arguments are from theyr Merits of
[y^{e} Churche.
w^{ch} not be Allowd by all to be y^{e} Competentest iudge of thys. That the
[spaniards are fore-
namd in y^{e} Acts of Councells and in Autors recitinge them, ys wyld proofe. for
[euerywhere
yo^{w} shall finde those relations to have been donne supinely and promiscuously,
[be-
cause y^{t} matter was not controvertd at y^{t} tyme. In the first quarrell at
[Constance
france was not a party. Nor by y^{e} Connivency of y^{t} Councell ~~of yt Counscell~~,
[w^{ch} would
not pronounce for us, nor y^{e} fury of y^{e} Basil, at least of y^{e} Castilian legat
[there,
where we were dejected, after long pretences, (sayth Valdesius) ys fraunce
[wounded at
all. She and spaine iostled first at Trent. And there, because the Emperiall
legat was neuer askd by y^{e} french, whether he were also Legate for spaine, nor
[protest
ed against, if he sat in y^{t} right, though yt appeard there was no other spaniard
legate there, therfore thys seems a possession of the place, as spaniard, not
[onely as
Emperiall. And after the Emporers death, when it was questiond, after
[exagitation
of y^{t} priviledge, he he spake first by Order; and that donne, left not y^{e} place
[to y^{e} french,
but to all y^{e} world, and satt wth the Clarke. And in the end, this Councell, as
[the others
also did, safeguarded by decree, the rights of all princes from any p^{r}iudice, by
[any Acte
donne, or omitted there. So, no Councell wytnessinge any p^{r}cedency in the
[french before,
nor any forfeyture beeinge on y^{e} spa: part here, and the spa: havinge donne here
[the last
Acts of p^{r}cedency, sittinge first, and speaking first, as long as he stayd, the
[matter seems
at least *Res integra* on the spa: side. Though yo^{w} shall scarse light upon any
[french
man, but considers ys as *rem confectam*. Not upon these Councells, but upon the
[decision of
pius 4, ~~against~~ [for] Charls 9 ~~for~~ [against] phil: 2. But to y^{t} Valdesi^{us}
[says, It was not donne Juridi-

cally: An Appeal was put in: The case nor parties are not now yᵉ same, spaine
[beeinge
increasd by portugall: And yᵉ spanish legat at Rome then, was by yᵉ kings
[expresse com-
mandement remisse in yt, because fraunce had solemly made hys protestacons there
[of depar
tinge from the Romane Churche, except yt were pronouncd for hym. But before
or after th[ys], Valdesius meddles wᵗʰ no opposition; I thinke because he
[respects no
other Judg[e][;] Therfore he remembers not yᵉ decree of yᵉ Venetian state i558.
[Nor yᵗ at
Vienna since, where hys party was so stronge; and yet the Emporer did no more
[but for-
bid intermeetings: Nor that in Poland Monluc had yt after. Allmost all yᵉ
[french
offer thys for yᵉ Issue, yᵗ before 58 at Venice yt was never askd, and Valdesius
maks yᵉ quarrell, I know not 'how old, for hys words are, mille saculis. But
[before
58, I have obserud one type of differinge at Calais i52i. where the point was
[whe-
ther yt then belongd to yᵉ spanish, Charls beeinge then Elect Emp: and k: of yᵉ
[Ro:
for wᵗʰout yᵗ Essentiall Circumstance, it seems no offer had been then made on
yt part. And though Valdesius profes liberality, to give more then theyr Autors
aske, (as indeed he ys often more submis, then hys Nation useth to bee, in armes
[or
Argument, when they haue reasonable appearence of Conquest,) yet it is easy to
[remem-
ber tyms of many such Circumstances for yᵉ frenche, as he swells up for yᵉ
[spanishe,
As yᵗ Cle[ment] [gaue] 100 days indulgence to any wʰ prayd for yᵉ french k: and
[Innoc:
4 added [10] wᶜʰ ys in Tho: Aquin: and many tymes yᵉ fr:k: hath gonne
[*lateraliter* wᵗʰ the
Emp: But there are such heaps of these, on both sides, as it wyll I thinke [ ]
euer remaine perplexd. for since in H[enry] 2 of fra: hys tyme, yᵉ pope would
[not iudge for
hym, Since phil: 2, could neuer Acquire yt, in all H[enry] 3 hys brauery against
[Rome, nor
in H[enry] 4 hys grovelinge to creepe into yᵉ Churche, nor in such a succession
[of Cosen Empe
rers, I know not when he should hope for yt. Sʳ I haue both held yᵒʳ booke
longer then I ment, and held yoʷ longer by thys letter, now I send it backe.
[yoʷ
yᵗ are a reale and free doer of benefits, I pʳsume, I pʳsume are also an easy
[pardoner of vnmalici-
ous faults.

Yoʳ affectionate frinde' d' seruant
J: DONNE

Pyford.

Transcribed from Cotton MS Cleopatra F.VII, f. 293 (Beal, No. 10)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (I: 123-25)

Textual Notes

l. 12 "Legate" should have an acute accent above the a (Legate).

Notes

l. 3 ye churche: the Catholic Church

l. 7 Constance: the Diet of Constance (1507) recognized the unity of the Holy Roman Empire and founded the Imperial Chamber.

l. 10 Basil

Castilian legat: kingdom in Spain

l. 12 Trent: Council of Trent (1545-63), the beginning of the Counter-Reformation

Emperiall legat: legate from the Holy Roman Emperor

l. 22 *rem confectam*: thing made

l. 24 pius 4: Pope Pius IV, Giovanni Angelo de' Medici (1499-1565), was elected Pope in 1559.

Charls 9: Charles IX of France succeeded to the throne in 1560 with Catherine de' Medici, his mother, as regent. He ruled until 1574.

phil: 2: Philip II of Spain (1527-1598) became king in 1556.

l. 32 Monluc

l. 34 *mille saculis*

l. 36 Charls: Charles I of Spain (1500-1558) became Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (1519-1958).

l. 42 Cle[ment]: Pope Clement

Innoc: 4: Pope Innocent IV reigned from 1243 to 1254.

l. 45 H[enry] 2: Henry II, King of France (1519-1559) became king 1547

H[enry] 3: Henry III, King of France in 1574; assassinated in 1588 and succeeded by Henry of Navarre.

Commentary

The book by Valdesius which Donne discusses in this letter is _De dignitate regum regnorumque Hispaniae, et honoratiori loco eis, seu eorum legatis, a conciliis ac Romana sede jure debito_ written by Don Diego de Valdez (Jacobus Valdesius) in 1600 and published in Madrid. Donne's letter is bound into the book (Bald, _Life_ 202). Valdesius's book defends the precedence of Spanish Ambassadors at European Courts. French and Spanish ambassadors had quarrelled over precedence for years. England, because of war with Spain, had been free of the quarrels, but with a peace treaty likely between Spain and England, the question of Spanish precedency with respect to England and other countries needed to be addressed by the English. Cotton had apparently been consulted on the matter and asked Donne his opinion (Bald, _Life_ 142). Bald suggests that Donne's analysis of Valdesius was sent to Cotton in 1603 or 1604, but if Donne's earlier letter to Cotton (written in 1601) refers to the same subject, perhaps 1602 is more likely.

1604

27

To S^{r} H: W: going unto Venice:

After those reverent papers whose soule is
Ou^{r} good & great kings loued hand & feard name
by w^{ch} to y^{o} he deriues much
and (how he may) makes y^{o} almost y^{e} same
A taper of his torch a coppy writt
from his originall and a fayre beame
of y^{e} same warme & dazling sonne though it
must in another spheare his vertue streame.
After those lerned papers w^{ch} y^{r} hand
hath stord wth notes of use & pleasure to
from w^{ch} safe tresury y^{o} may command
fitt matter whether y^{o} will write or do
After those loving papers where frends send
wth gladsome griefe to y^{r} seaward steps farwell
w^{ch} thicken on y^{o} as prayers ascend
to heaven in troupes at a good mans passing bell,
admitt this honest paper & allow
it such an audience as y^{or}self would aske
what y^{o} must say at Venice this means now
and hath for nature what y^{o} have for taske
to sweare much loue not to bee chang[d] before
honor & loue will to y^{r} fortune fitt
nor shall I then honor y^{r} fortune more
then I haue done y^{e} noble wanting it
but tis one easier load though both oppresse
to want then governe greatnes for we are
in that o^{r} owne & only busines
in this we must for others vices care
Tis therefore well y^{r} spirits now are placd
in there last furnace in activity
w^{ch} fitts them (schooles & courts & trade orepast)
to touch & tast of my best degree
for me (if there be such a thing as I)
fortune (if there be such a thing as shee)
Spies y^{t} so well I beare her tyranny
as nothing else shee thinks so fitt for mee.
but though shee part vs heere my oft prayers
for y^{r} encrease god is as neere me heere
and to send y^{o} what I shall begg his stayres
in lenght & ease overall alike every where.

postscript

S^{r} though perchaunce it were nev^{r} tryed except in Rabelais his land of tapistry it may bee true y^{t} a pygmey vpon a Giant may see further then

y^{e} giant so after a long lette[r] this postscript may see further into y^{o} then
[y^{t}
if y^{o} will answere to 2 questions whether y^{o} haue y^{r} last despatches
at court or whether y^{o} make many dayes stay there or at London.
such a one as I may yett kisse y^{r} hand.

Source: Burley MS., f. 285^{v} and f. 286 (postscript)

Textual Notes

The title appears in the left margin between ll. 2 and 3 and ll. 3 and 4.

This text is a transcription of the Burley MS. The verse letter also appears in Group II MSS: (A18, N, TCC, TCD); DC; Group III MSS: (Lut, O'F); and Miscellanies: Hk2, La. Milgate (75-76) prints an emended text based on 1633 and notes some variants. Milgate did not have access to the text in the Burley MSS. when editing this verse letter, although that may not have affected his view of the text. Peters, in her edition of The Paradoxes and Problems, discusses the authority of the Burley MSS. The postscript occurs only in the Burley MSS.

Notes

l. 12 kings: King James I. Wotton had met James in Scotland at the Scottish court. Wotton had been sent to warn James about a plot against his life and frequented the court disguised as an Italian gentleman.

l. 5 A taper of his torch: See 'The Kings of the earth are faire and glorious resemblances of the King of heaven; they are beames of that Sun, Tapers of that Torch' (Sermons v.85).

ll. 17-20 Milgate glosses these lines: Give this letter a warm reception of the kind which you would like to receive as ambassador. This letter sincerely means what you will say in Venice out of duty: it is an expression of friendship.

ll. 23-24 "y^e noble wanting it": Milgate rejects the reading shared by Burley and the Group II MSS. in favor of the 1633 reading, "your honor wanting it." Milgate glosses the 1633 as meaning "to hold your eminent position in higher respect than I hold your honorable nature now, while you yet lack eminence.' If this verse letter is considered in the context of the early prose letters in the Burley MS, however, the Burley text seems more likely to be correct. Donne appears to be saying in this verse letter, as he does in prose letters of the same period written to Wotton, that Donne honors or admires Wotton's stoicism in misfortune (the period in Wotton's life when he was forced by Essex's disgrace to retire to the country). Donne honors Wotton's new position equally, although, as Donne states, the new position is more difficult since Wotton must deal with others' vices.

ll. 29-32 Donne uses an alchemical metaphor that suggests that Wotton's honorable qualities will be refined by heat (the furnace of action) to make Wotton a touchstone to test others' characters (Milgate 234).

ll. 33-34 Donne's view of himself as a nothing is discussed in the General Introduction.

postscript:

l. 2 land of tapistry:

> Dr. C. T. Onions points out that it is a reference to Rabelais, Bk. V, ch. xxix, "Comment nous visitasmes le pays de Satin . . .

> duquel les arbres et herbes ne perdoient fleur ne feuilles, et estoient de damas, et velours figure: Les bestes et oiseaux estoient de tapisserie." It is described also as "le pays de tapisserie" both in this and in the following chapter. It is peopled mainly by fantastic and mythological creatures. (Simpson, Prose Works 319)

l. 2 a pygmey vpon a Giant:

> Professor C. C. J. Webb points out that this was a saying of Bernard of Chartres preserved by John of Salisbury in the Metalogicon, iii. 4 (p. 131, ed. Giles; Migne, Patr. Lat., cxcix. 900 c): "Dicebat Bernardus Carnotensis nos esse quasi nanos gigantium humeris insidentes, ut possimus plura eis et remotiora videre, non utique proprii visus acumine aut eminentia corporis, sed quia in altum subvehimur et extollimur magnitudine gigantea." (Simpson, Prose Works 319-20)

Commentary

Walton quotes this poem in his Lives and introduces it as follows:

> 'And though his dear friend Dr. Donne (then a private Gentleman) was not one of that number that did personally accompany him in this Voyage, yet the reading of this following Letter sent by him to Sir Henry Wotton, the morning before he left England, may testifie he wanted not his friends best wishes to attend him.' (114)

King James knighted Wotton on 3 July 1604 (O.S.). Wotton left London about 13 July and embarked for Venice from Dover on 19 July (Milgate 233). This letter, then, must belong to July 1604.

28

To S^r G. M. [To Sir Henry Goodyer]

IF you were here, you would not think
me importune, if I bid you good mor-
row every day; and such a patience will ex-

cuse my often Letters. No other kinde of conveyance is better for knowledge, or love: What treasures of Morall knowledge are in Senecaes Letters to onely one Lucilius? and what of Naturall in Plinies? how much of the storie of the time, is in Ciceroes Letters? And how all of these times, in the Jesuites Eastern and Western Epistles? where can we finde so perfect a Character of Phalaris, as in his own Letters, which are almost so many writs of Execution? Or of Brutus, as in his privie seals for monie? The Evangiles and Acts, teach us what to beleeve, but the Epistles of the Apostles what to do. And those who have endevoured to dignifie Seneca above his worth, have no way fitter, then to imagine Letters between him and S. Paul. As they think also that they have expressed an excellent person, in that Letter which they obtrude, from our B. Saviour to King Agabarus. The Italians, which are most discursive, and think the world owes them all wisdome, abound so much in this kinde of expressing, that Michel Montaige saies, he hath seen, (as I remember) 400 volumes of Italian Letters. But it is the other capacity which must make mine acceptable, that they are also the best conveyers of love. But, though all knowledge be in those Authors already, yet, as some poisons, and some medicines, hurt not, nor profit, except the creature in which they reside, contribute their lively activitie, and vigor; so, much of the knowledge buried in Books perisheth, and becomes ineffectuall, if it be not applied, and refreshed by a companion, or friend. Much of their goodnesse, hath the same period, which some Physicians of Italy have observed to be in the biting of their Tarentola, that it affects no longer, then the flie lives. For with how much desire we read the papers of any living now, (especially friends) which we would scarce allow a boxe in our cabinet, or shelf in our Library, if they were dead? And we do justly in it, for the writings and words of men present, we may examine, controll, and expostulate, and receive satisfaction from the authors; but the other we must beleeve, or discredit; they present no mean. Since then at this time, I am upon the stage, you may be content to hear me. And now that perchance I have brought you to it, (as *Thom. Badger* did the King) now I have nothing to say. And it is well, for the Letter is already long enough, else let this probleme supply, which was occasioned by you, of women wearing stones; which, it seems, you were afraid women should read, because you avert them at the beginning, with a protestation of cleanlinesse. *Martiall* found no way fitter to draw the Romane Matrons to read one of his Books, which he thinks most morall and cleanly, then to counsell them by the first Epigram to skip the Book, because it was obscene. But either you write not at all for women, or for those of sincerer palates. Though their unworthinesse, and your own ease be advocates for me with you, yet I must adde my entreaty, that you let goe no copy of my Problems, till I review them. If it be too late, at least be able to tell me who hath them.

Yours,
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 35 (105-08)

Also in Gosse (I: 122-23)

Notes

1. 7 *Senecaes* Letters to onely one *Lucilius*: Seneca "the Philosopher," c. 4 B.C.-A.D. 65. Seneca was the second son of Seneca "the Elder," who was the proconsul of Achaea before whom the apostle Paul was tried. Seneca the younger was born in Spain and brought to Rome as a child. He eventually became a senator and narrowly escaped death under Caligula. He occupied a position at court under Claudius, but was banished to Corsica in 41, probably on a trumped-up charge of Messalina's. He was recalled in 49 by Agrippina to tutor Nero. Nero succeeded Claudius in 54, but his depravity caused Seneca to offer Nero his wealth and to withdraw from court in

62. In 65 on a charge of conspiracy he was ordered to take his own life, which he did with great dignity, as befitted his stoic philosophy.

Seneca was a prolific writer. A small portion of his writings are 124 Epistles to his friend Lucilius. Lucilius was procurator of Sicily and a poet. He may have written the poem "Aetna." Seneca's letters are, in effect, moral essays on various aspects of life including the supreme good, the terrors of death, and so on. The letters are warm and persuasive, not dogmatic, and reveal much about Roman daily life. They were approved of and used by early Christian writers. In the Middle Ages Seneca was thought to have been a Christian. St. Jerome and others believed that Seneca corresponded with St. Paul (Harvey 388-90).

l. 8 of Naturall in Plinies: Donne appears to conflate Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger here. Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23 or 24-79) was a soldier and administrator who died in the eruption of Vesuvius. He was a prolific writer who wrote books on military history, science, oratory, grammar, biography, and history. His greatest work, however, was Naturalis Historia in thirty-seven books. A natural history that dealt with an encyclopedic range of subjects including physics, geography, zoology, medicine, minerals and metallurgy, and even included a digression on the history of art. Pliny the Younger was the nephew of Pliny the Elder, who took his uncle's name after being adopted in his uncle's will. He was extremely wealthy, practised in the courts and was an honest, if timid, administrator. Pliny the Younger's literary reputation is derived from his 10 books of Letters, which were written or revised with a view to publication and which range from short notes asking for news to elaborate discussions on public affairs. These letters, like Seneca's, provide a great deal of information about Roman daily life (Harvey 334-36).

l. 9 Ciceroes Letters: Cicero (106-43 B.C.). Cicero, Roman orator and statesman, author of four collections of letters that have survived. These include 774 letters by Cicero and ninety to him. Cicero's letters, which were written with exceptional clarity and candor, deal with politics, philosophy, literature and household affairs, and were written to diverse correspondents including Antony, Caesar, Pompeii and Brutus, as well as people from a variety of other social positions (Harvey 103-04). Cicero is mentioned in several other of Donne's letters and was highly esteemed in England in Donne's time.

l. 11 the Jesuites Eastern and Western Epistles: St. Francis Xavier first reached Japan in 1549, the same year that Manuel da Nobrega reached Brazil. By the time of Donne's letter, the Jesuits had had missions in the east and west for fifty-five years. Their letters were an important element in creating interest in their missions.

ll. 12-13 a Character of Phalaris: Phalaris was a tyrant of Acragas in Sicily, probably in the first half of the sixth century B.C. He is said to have been a cruel ruler who roasted his victims in a brazen bull, invented by Perillus, himself the first to be roasted. The "Epistles" attributed to Phalaris were proved to be forgeries in 1697-99 by Richard Bentley (Harvey 320) (Oxford Companion to English Literature, 4th ed., 82).

l. 15 Brutus: Marcus Junius Brutus (78?-42 B.C.) is well known as the idealist who joined Cassius and the other conspirators to assassinate Caesar. Another side of Brutus's character is shown through his financial dealings with the people of Salamis in Cyprus, which are described by Cicero. Brutus lent money to the town at forty-eight per cent interest and was prepared to do anything to recover the debt. He once had his agents shut a number of prominent townspeople in the senate-house and kept them there without food until some died. He appealed to Cicero, who was governor of Cilicia, the province in which Salamis was located, and was aggrieved by Cicero's refusal to provide help to collect the debt (Harvey 82).

l. 24 King Agabarus [Agabus]: prophet and martyr of the early Christian church, supposed to have been one of the 70 disciples of Christ (see Acts xi:27-28) (New Century Cyclopedia of Names).

l. 28 Michel Montaigne's four hundred volumes of Italian Letters (Bald, Life 2) corrects Donne's remark about Montaigne, the French author (1533-92) of the Essays. "What Montaigne actually said was, 'The Italians are great Printers of Epistles, whereof I thinke I have a hundred severall Volumes' (I. xxxix, trans. Florio)."

l. 57 Thom. Badger: Tom was used as a representative proper name. Donne is alluding to James I's well-known passion for hunting.

The sense seems to be that Donne, like a badger digging to avoid the confrontation with the king and his hounds who have him at bay, disappoints at the moment of climax.

1. 65 Martiall (A.D. 40-104): Martial was born in Spain and came to Rome in A.D. 64, where he was protected by Seneca and Lucan. He was poor and wrote poetry. He is best known for his *Epigrams*, short poems expressing concisely some single idea. A large proportion include elements of gross obscenity (which he defends in the preface to Book I and in I.35), which appear to amuse rather than repel him. Book V, addressed to *matronae puerique virginesque*, and Book VIII include no obscenities.

Donne tells Goodyer that telling women readers that his problem of women is clean will drive them away. Martial told women readers that one of his books was obscene to entice them to read it, even though Martial considers it "most morall and cleanly."

Donne's comment about the sexual immorality of women is meant to be witty and is similar to the kind of wit that he employs in many of the *Songs and Sonnets*, including "Woman's constancy," "Song, Goe, and catche a falling starre," and "The Baite."

Commentary

Gosse (I: 122) suggests that this letter was written to Sir George More because of the heading ("To Sir G.M.") and dates it as "probably" belonging to 1603 or 1604. R. E. Bennett ("Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons*" 132, 136) regards this as another letter of Donne's to Sir Henry

Goodyer, although he gives no date for it. Donne's reference at the end of his letter to his *Problems* would be consistent with Gosse's date of 1603 or later. Bald (*Life* 200) dates the *Problems* "in James I's reign and some of them certainly in 1607, when several letters to Goodyer refer to individual problems of recent composition which Donne was sending." The latest possible date for any of the Problems is probably 1609 (Simpson, *Prose Works* 147). As to the recipient of the letter, Bennett is almost certainly correct. The letter is characteristic of many of Donne's letters to Goodyer in that it is much like an essay, in this case, on the topic of letter writing, although friendship and virtue were other common topics of Donne's letters to Goodyer. See the General Introduction for a discussion of this letter and Donne's views on the art of letter writing.

29

S^{r} as well in Loue as in greife why should not sylence be interpreted a signe rather of store then want? so if y^{o} construe myne at this tyme y^{o} shall not be mistaken. & besyds y^{r} frendly censure of me will deserve thanks: Let me intreat y^{o} mayntayne this Loue betweene vs by this meanes of sylent discoursing whereby I shall hold y^{e} defect of absence half cured & made by conceit a well formed p^{r}sence vntill it may be so indeed. w^{ch} I will further. And although you can never receaue from me so worthy a loue as may iustly deserue yo^{rs} yet y^{o} shall haue mine what it is in the highest measure & if y^{r} gentle disposition can frame it pleasing to y^{r} self I shall hold myself happy because I haue my most ernest desyre satisfied in being reputed as

I am y^{r} honest frend.

Source: Burley MS., f. 297^{v}

Commentary

Simpson does not comment on this letter, but by her placement of the letter she appears to link it with B.M. f. 300 (No. 30), which she suggests was written to Wotton after July 1604. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") is very doubtful this letter was written by Donne. Two aspects of the letter suggest that it could have been written by Donne to Wotton. The first is the subject of the letter: the writer apologizes for not writing more often. The number of letters exchanged is a common topic throughout the confirmed letters of the Donne-Wotton correspondence. Secondly, the writer's rationale for his silence is a typically Donnean idea: silence may be interpreted as a sign of a store of friendship as it is interpreted as a sign of grief. Moreover, this is developed as the paradox of "silent discourse" which half cures the "defect of absence" into a "well formed p^{r}sence." The topic of the number of letters written or received, apologies for not writing, or admonitions for not receiving enough letters or apologies for the kind and length of letters occur in the letters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 24, 26, and 27 of the Burley MS. as numbered in Simpson's collection.

1605

30

S^{r}.
My Loue maks me write vnworthy lettres and yet you had
wont to measure a lett^{r} by the Loue of the writer: then haue
I matter enough, for I know this assuredly that this lett^{r}
hath loue enough to make it worthy, were he worth any
thing that writes it therefore bycause he loues you. yet
least I say nothing lett my tell you S^{r}. that the sleeping
preacher is sent for [againe] to the king for y^{t} contrary to his promise
he practises againe w^{ch} maks some report that his former
confession was vntrue and extorted and y^{t} it was in him an
act either natural or diuine: for my self I am assured
that never Heriticke or any other Innovator of State or
Religion tooke a more dangerous course then hee doth or more
powerfull to perswade a people were not the king as ready
to prevent. The particularities y^{o} shall haue by the next. In the
meane tyme assure y^{r} self y^{t} y^{r} commands shall nev^{r} be able to surprise or
surcharge me.

Source: Burley MS., f. 300^{v}

Transcription Notes

l. 6 lett my: Simpson (327) suggests a scribal error for "lett my Letter"; possibly the transcription should read "lett me."

Commentary

The sleeping preacher appeared in court in 1605, which must be the year in which this letter was written. The sleeping preacher was Richard Haydock or Haddock, who developed the attention-getting device of preaching while he was ostensibly sleeping. He was able to persist and finish these sermons despite attempts to awaken him by pinching and prodding. Haddock's exploits drew the attention of King James, who apparently took great delight in showing Haddock to be a fraud.

According to Arthur Wilson, the King invited Haddock to preach to him and the next morning sent for him and

> in private handled him so like a cunning Chirurgion, that he found out the sore; making him confess not only his sin and error in the act, but the cause that urged him to it, which was, That he apprehended himself as a buried man in the University, being of a low condition, and if something eminent and remarkable did not spring from him, to give life to his Reputation, he should never appear anybody, which made him attempt this Novelty to be taken notice of.' See also the accounts in Anthony a Wood, Annales, ii. 284; and Nichols, Progresses of James I, i. 509, in which further particulars are given. (quoted in Simpson 32)

Simpson does not suggest who the recipient of the letter was. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") rejects this as one of Donne's letters. The writer's description of himself as not "worth any thing" and someone who writes "vnworthy letters" and who says "nothing" is a characteristic technique in Donne's letters, and I include this one here rather than in the appendix for that reason.

1606

31

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Love to give you advantages upon me, therefore I put my self in need of another pardon from you, by not comming to you; yet I am scarce guilty enough to spend much of your vertue from you, because I knew not of your being come till this your Letter told me so, in the midst of dinner at Peckham, this Monday. Sir, I am very truly yours; if you have overvalued me in any capacity, I will do what I can to overtake your hopes of me. I wish my self whatsoever you wish me; and so I do, what ever you wish your self. I am prisoner and close; else I had not needed this pardon, for I long much, and much more by occasion of your Letter, to see you: when you finde that good Lady emptiest of businesse and pleasure, present my humble thanks; you can do me no favour, which I need not, nor any, which I cannot have some hope to deserve, but this; for I have made her opinion of me, the ballance by which I weigh my self. I will come soon enough to deliver my thanks to Sir J. Harr. for your ease, whom I know I have pained with an ilfavoured Letter, but my heart hath one style, and character; and is yours in wishing, and in thankfulnesse.

J. Donne.

Peckham Monday afternoon.

Source: Letters No. 49 (150-51)

Also in Gosse (I: 213)

Transcription Notes

l. 24 Sir J. Harr.: Sir John Harrington

Commentary

Gosse dates this letter early 1609 because he did not think that Donne began to visit the Countess of Bedford (who is the lady referred to in the letter) until 1609. Bald (Life 154, 172), however, dates this letter shortly after Donne's return from the Continent in April 1606 with Sir Walter Chute because the letter implies the beginning of Donne's friendship with the Countess of Bedford. Donne did not develop close relations with the Countess of Bedford until 1607, when she acquired Twickenham Park near Donne's house at Mitcham. Donne and his family lived with his brother-in-law Sir Francis Wolley at Pyrford after Donne's marriage until 1606, when Donne was reconciled with his father-in-law, Sir George More. Donne then received a small income from Sir George More in lieu of a dowry for Anne Donne, which would have permitted him to take a house for his family (Bald, Life 153).

The Sir John Harrington Donne refers to is the Countess of Bedford's brother, the 2nd Lord of Exton, and the closest friend of Prince Henry. Donne refers to him in other letters, and wrote an obsequy on his death. Gosse (I: 212) mistakenly suggests that Donne is referring to Sir John Harington of Kelston, the translator of the Orlando Furioso.

Peckham was the home of Donne's brother-in-law Sir Thomas Grymes, whose family had perhaps the closest relationship with Donne and his family of all of Donne's in-laws.

32

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Live so farre removed, that even the ill news of your great losse (which is ever swiftest and loudest) found me not till now, your letter speaks it not plain enough but I am so accustomed to the worst, that I am sure it is so in this. I am almost glad that I knew her so little: for I would have no more additions to sorrow. if I should comfort you, it were an almes acceptable in no other title, then when poor give to poor; for I am more needy of it then you. And I know you well provided of Christian, and learned, and brave defences against all humane accidents. I will make my best haste after your messenger: and if my self and the place had not been ill provided of horses, I had been the messenger, for you have taught me by granting more to deny no request.

Pyesford 3 a clock   *Your honest unprofitable friend*
just as yours came.   J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 76 (212)

Also in Gosse (I: 128)

Transcription Notes

Closing Pyesford: Pyreford

Commentary

Gosse dates this letter 1604, because although he knows that it refers to the death of Sir Henry Goodyer's wife, the date of her death was not then known. Bald (*Life* 154) dates this letter 1606 because her death was commemorated in that year by John Owen in an epigram, "*Ad Henricum Goodyer Equitem, optima conjuga orbatum 1606*" in *Epigrammatum ad Arabellam Stuart liber singularis*, No. 74 (Bald, *Life* 154, n. 2).

Perhaps because this letter was written from Pyreford in 1606, Bald assumes that Donne returned there in April 1606 after his travels with Sir Walter Chute to the Continent and lived at Pyreford for at least a short time before moving his family to Mitcham, which occurred at the end of 1606 at the latest.

1607

33

To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,

THough you escape my lifting up of your latch by removing, you cannot my Letters; yet of this Letter I do not much accuse my self, for I serve your Commandment in it, for it is only to convey to you this paper opposed to those, with which you trusted me. It is (I cannot say the waightyest, but truly) the saddest lucubration and nights passage that ever I had. For it exercised those hours, which, with extreme danger of her, whom I should hardly have abstained from recompensing for her company in this world, with accompanying her out of it, encreased my poor family with a son. Though her anguish, and my fears, and hopes, seem divers and wild distractions from this small businesse of your papers, yet because they all narrowed themselves, and met in *Via regia*, which is the consideration of our selves, and God, I thought it time not unfit for this dispatch. Thus much more then needed I have told you, whilest my fire was lighting at Tricombs 10 a clock.

Yours every intirely
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 47 (146-47)

Also in Gosse (I: 154)

Transcription Notes

ll. 23-24 Tricombs Tincomb or Tinkham: See Donne's Latin letter to Goodyer of 1611 in Appendix I.

Notes

l. 19 _Via regia_: royal way (way to God). Donne may be wittily alluding to the fact that King's Street led to Westminster Abbey.

Commentary

This letter can be dated early January 1607 by Donne's references to the birth of a son, his small family, and his lodgings at Tincomb's. While living at Mitcham, to enable him to secure employment and maintain his social contacts, Donne kept lodgings at the house of a man named Tincombe in the Strand at least from early 1607 until 1611, when he went abroad with Sir Robert Drury (Bald, _Life_ 158). Francis Donne, Donne's fourth child, was the first child to be baptized at Mitcham: the baptism took place on 8 January 1607. Since Donne was living at Mitcham when he wrote this letter, and since Francis was the only son born while Donne lived there, the letter must refer to Francis.

References to Donne doing "small businesse" for Goodyer appear frequently in his letters, although he (understandably) never comments on the activities directly.

34

To the Honourable K^{t} S^{r} H. Goodere _one of the_
Gent. of his Majesties privy Chamber
[Sir Henry Goodyer].

SIR,
YOU may remember that long since
you delivered M^{r} _Fowler_ possession of
me, but the wide distance in which I have
lived from Court, makes me reasonably

> fear, that now he knows not his right and power in me, though he must of necessity have all, to whom you and I joyn in a gift of me, as we did to him, so that perchance he hath a servant of me, which might be passed in a book of concealment. If your leisure suffer it, I pray finde whether I be in him still, and conserve me in his love; and so perfect your own work, or doe it over again, and restore me to the place, which by your favour I had in him. For M^r *Powell* who serves her Ma^{ty} as Clerk of her counsell, hath told me that M^r *Fowler* hath some purpose to retire himself; and therefore I would fain for all my love, have so much of his, as to finde him willing when I shall seek him at Court, to let me understand his purpose therein; for if my means may make me acceptable to the Queen and him, I should be very sorry, he should make so farre steps therein with any other, that I should fail in it, onely for not having spoke to him soon enough. It were an injury to the forwardnesse of your love to adde more; here therefore I kisse your hands and commend to you the truth of my love.
>
> *From my lodging in the* Strand *whither I shall return on* Munday, 13 June 1607.
>
> *Your very affectionate*
> *servant and lover*
> Jo. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 28 (81-82)

Also in Gosse (I: 156)

Commentary

Donne asks Sir Henry Goodyer (who was one of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber to the King but who also appears to have been attached to the Bedford household [Bald, *Life* 162, n. 1]) to approach William Fowler, the Queen's secretary, on Donne's behalf for an unidentified vacancy that had occurred in the Queen's household. Donne had probably met Fowler in 1603, because Fowler accompanied the new Court of James on its first progress, during which time the king visited Sir Francis Wolley at Pyrford (where Donne lived with his wife) and his father-in-law, Sir

George More, at Loseley (Bald, Life 141). Fowler was probably a member of the same club as Donne, the Mitre club, since Donne mentions him in a letter, which was meant to amuse a list of men who appear to be members of his club, sent to Goodyer in 1612 (Bald, Life 195). Goodyer's relations with Fowler were probably due to his role in the Bedford household, because the Countess of Bedford was the Queen's closest friend. That Donne approached Goodyer and not the Countess of Bedford to help him suggests that a close relationship between Donne and the Countess of Bedford did not develop until later in 1607. See Bald (Life 173-79) for a discussion of Donne's early relationship with the Countess of Bedford.

35

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

THis Teusday morning, which hath brought me to London, presents mee with all your letters. Mee thought it was a rent day, I meane such as yours, and not as mine. And yet such too, when I considered how much I ought you for them. How good a mother, how fertile and abundant the understanding is, if shee have a good father. And how well friendship performes that office. For that which is denyed in other generations is done in this of yours. For hers is supersaetation, child upon child, and, that which is more strange, twinnes at a latter conception. If in my second religion, friendship, I had a conscience, either *Errantem* to mistake good and bad, and indifferent, or *Opinantem* to be ravished by others opinions or examples, or *Dubiam* to adhere to neither part, or *Scrupulosam* to encline to one, but upon reasons light in themselves or indiscussed in mee (which are almost all the diseases of conscience) I might mistake your often, long, and busie letters, and feare you did but intreate me to have mercy upon you and spare you. For you know our court tooke the resolution, that it was the best way to dispatch the French Prince backe againe quickly, to receive him solemnely, ceremoniously; and expensively, when he hoped a domestique and durable entertainment. I never meant to excell you in waight nor price, but in number and bulke I thought I might: Because he may cast up a greater summe who hath but forty small moneyes, then hee with twenty Portuguesses. The memory of friends, (I meane only for letters) neither enters ordinarily into busied men, because they are ever employed within, nor into men of pleasure, because they are never at home. For these wishes therefore which you wonne out of your pleasure and recreation, you were as excusable to mee if you writ seldome as Sir H. Wotton is under the oppression of businesse or the necessity of seeming so: Or more then hee, because I hope you have both pleasure and businesse. Only to me, who have neither, this omission were sinne. For though writing be not of the precepts of friendship, but of the counsells: yet, as in some cases to some men counsells become precepts, though not immediately from God, yet very roundly and quickly from his Church, (as selling and dividing goods in the first time, continence in the Romane Church, and order and decency in ours) so to mee who can doe nothing else, it seemes to binde my conscience to write. And it is sinne to doe against the conscience, though that erre; Yet no mans letters might be better wanted then mine, since my whole letter is nothing else but a confession that I should and would write. I ought you a letter in verse before by mine owne promise, & now that you thinke you have hedged in that debt by a greater by your letter in verse I thinke it now most seasonable and fashionall for mee to breake. At least, to write presently were to accuse my selfe of not having read yours so often as such a letter deserves from you to mee. To make my debt greater (for such is the desire of all, who cannot or meane not to pay) I pray reade these two problemes: for such light flashes as these have beene my hawkings in my Surry journies. I accompany them with another ragge of verses, worthy of that name for the smalnesse, and age, for it hath long lyen among my other papers, and laughs at them that have adventured to you: for I thinke till now you saw it not, and neither you, nor it should repent it. Sir, if I were any thing, my love to you might multiply it, and dignifie it: But infinite nothings are but one such: Yet since even Chymeraes have some name, and titles, I am also

Yours.

Source: *Poems*, 1633 (359-61)

Collation

Poems: 1633, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

Letters: 1651, 54

Title: *To Sir H.G.* 1633 pp. 359-61
1635, 39 pp. 289-91
1649-54 pp. 278-81
1669 pp. 274-77

To Sir H.G. *Letters* 1651, 54 pp. 85-88
1719 pp. 244-46

SIR] *SIR* 1719

l. 1 Teusday] *Tuesday* 1651, 54 1719

l. 2 London] *London* 1651, 54 1719 mee] me 1649-1719 1651, 54
mee/thought] me/thought 1649-54 1651, 54
Methought 1669 1719

l. 3 rent day] rent-day 1719 meane] mean 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 4 mine.] mine: 1635-1719 1651, 54 And] and 1651, 54 1719

l. 5 them.] them, 1651, 54 How] how 1651, 54
mother] Mother 1719

l. 6 fertile] fertill 1651, 54 abundant] aboundant 1649-69
is,] is 1649-69

l. 7 shee] she 1635-1719 1651, 54 father.] Father. 1649-69
Father! 1719 father; 1651, 54 And] and 1651, 54

l. 8 performes] performs 1651, 54 1719 office.] office 1719
that] that, 1719 denyed] denied 1651, 54 1719

l. 9 generations] generations, 1719 yours.] yours: 1651, 54 1719
For] for 1651, 54 hers] here 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 10 supersaetation] supersoetation 1719 supersetation 1651, 54
childe] child 1635, 39 1651, 54
childe] child 1635, 39 1651, 54 and,] and 1651, 54

l. 11 twinnes] twins 1651, 54 1669 1719

l. 12 friendship] Friendship 1719 conscience] Conscience 1669 1719

l. 13 *Errantem*] *errantem* 1651, 54 *Errantem*, 1719
bad,] bad 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 14 Opinantem] opinantem 1651, 54 Opinantem, 1719
be] bee 1635, 39

l. 15 Dubiam] dubiam 1651, 54 Dubiam, 1719

l. 16 Scrupulosam] scrupulosam 1635-69 1651, 54 Scrupulosam, 1719
encline] incline 1635-54 1719

l. 17 themselves] theselves 1635, 39 themselves, 1651, 54 1719
mee] me 1635-1719 me, 1651, 54 which] w^{ch} 1635
all] al 1635, 39

l. 18 conscience] cosiece 1635, 39

l. 19 letters] Letters 1651, 54 feare] fear 1649-1719 1651, 54
intreate] intreat 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 20 you and] you, and 1635-1719 you. For] you; for 1651, 54

l. 21 know] know, 1719 court] Court 1635-1719 1651, 54
tooke] took 1649-54 1719 1651, 54

l. 22 French] Frenche 1719 backe] back 1649-1719 1651, 54
againe] again 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 23 quickly,] quickly 1635-69
solemnely] solemnly 1635-1719 1651, 54
ceremoniously;] ceremoniously, 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 25 entertainment] entertain[ ]ment 1639

l. 26 waight] weight 1651, 54 1669 1719
bulke] bulk 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 27 might: Because] might, because 1651, 54 might: because 1669
might; because 1719 he] hee 1635, 39 summe] summ 1669
sum, 1719

l. 28 moneyes] moneys 1635-69 monies 1651, 54 1719
then] than 1669 1719 hee] he 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 29 Portuguesses] Portuguezes 1719
meane] mean 1649-1719 1651, 54 only] onley 1635-54 1651, 54

l. 30 letters] Letters 1651, 54 1669 1719

l. 31 employed] imployed 1635-69 emploied 1651, 54
within,] within; 1719

l. 33 therefore] therfore 1635 therefore, 1719
which] w^{ch} 1635 wonne] won 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 34 and] & 1635 mee] me 1639-1719 1651, 54

l. 35 seldome] seldom 1651, 54 1669 1719
H. Wotton] H. Wootton 1635, 39 *H. Wootton* 1649-69
H. Wotton 1651, 54 1719 is] is, 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 36 businesse] businesse, 1635-54 1651, 54 business, 1669 1719
necessity] necessitie 1635, 39 so: Or] so; or 1651, 54 1719

l. 37 then] than 1635, 39, 69 1719 hee] he 1639-1719 1651, 54

l. 38 businesse. Only] business. Onely 1639-69
businesse: onely 1651, 54 business; only 1719

l. 39 sinne.] sin. 1669 1719 sinne; 1651, 54 For] for 1651, 54
be] bee 1635, 39

l. 40 counsells:] counsels: 1669 counsells, 1651, 54
counsels; 1719 yet,] yet 1719

l. 41 counsells] counsels 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 42 though] tho' 1719

l. 44 Romane] Roman 1635, 39, 69 Roma*n* 1649-54 *Roman* 1719

l. 45 decency] decencie 1651, 54 ours] ours; 1719
mee] me 1649-69 1651, 54 me, 1719

l. 46 doe] do 1651, 54 1669 1719
seemes] seems 1635, 1649-1719 1651, 54
binde] bind 1669 1719

l. 47 write. And] write; and 1651, 54
sinne] sin 1669 1719 doe] do 1669 1719

l. 48 erre;] erre. 1635-69 1651, 54 err; 1719

l. 49 be] bee 1639 then] than 1635, 39, 69 1719
letter] Letter 1651, 54

l. 50 confession] confession, 1719

l. 51 letter] Letter 1651, 54

l. 52 promise,] promise; 1719 &] and 1635-1719 1651, 54
thinke] think 1649-69 think that 1669 1719

l. 53 greater] greater, 1669 1719 letter] Letter 1651, 54
verse] verse, 1635, 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 54 thinke] think 1649-1719 1651, 54
fashionall] fashional 1669 1719 fashionable 1651, 54
mee] me 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 55 breake.] break. 1635-69 1651, 54 break; 1719 At] at 1719
least,] least 1649-54 presently] presently, 1651, 54

l. 56 selfe] self 1649-1719 1651, 54 letter] Letter 1651, 54

l. 57 mee] me 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 59 meane] mean 1649-1719 1651, 54 pray] pray, 1719
reade] read 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 60 problemes] problems 1669 1719

l. 61 beene] been 1635, 1649-1719 1651, 54 hawkings] hawking 1719
Surry] sorry 1651, 54 *Surrey* 1719

l. 62 them] the*m* 1635 ragge] rag 1719

l. 63 smallnesse,] smallness 1669 1719

l. 64 lyen] lien 1651, 54 lain 1719 papers] Papers 1635-1719
and] & 1635, 1649-54 them] them, 1719

l. 65 for] for, 1669 thinke] think 1649-54 1719 think, 1669

l. 67 thing,] thing 1669

l. 68 But] but 1719

l. 69 such:] such; 1651, 54 Yet] yet 1651, 54
Chymeraes] Chymera's 1651, 54 Chimera's 1719
name,] name 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 71 *Yours*] Yours 1635-1719 1651, 54

Textual Notes

l. 10 supersaetation: ae is written as a ligature.

Notes

l. 3 rent day: Donne here compares rent day for Goodyer, a landlord, with rent day for himself, a tenant.

l. 5 ought: owe (also see line 51).

l. 10 supersaetation: beyond the condition of being filled or satisfied (*O.E.D.* 1602)

l. 17 indiscussed: undiscussed, uninvestigated or unexamined by argument (O.E.D.)

l. 29 Portuguesses: Portuguese gold coins.

l. 35 "Sir H. Wotton (1568-1639) went up to New College, Oxford, from Winchester College, in 1584. He had transferred to Hart Hall by the time Donne arrived there in October 1584, and became his friend" (Walton, Lives, pp. 15, 106). Wotton, who entered the Middle Temple in 1595, and became a secretary of Essex, went (like Donne) with the Earl on the Cadiz and Islands expeditions (Milgate, 225). Wotton remained a lifelong friend of Donne's and received three English verse letters, and one Latin verse letter from Donne, as well as prose letters.

l. 54 fashionall: fashionable (O.E.D.)

l. 62 ragge of verses: Since paper was made of rags, Donne is playfully deprecating his poetry here.

Commentary

Gosse (I: 171) assigns this letter to July of 1607 based on Donne's reference to the entertainment of the French Prince, which refers to the visit of the Prince de Joinville, brother of the Duc de Guise, who visited England for four or five weeks in May and June 1607. Donne's reference to writing on rent day, however, suggests that the letter was written on Midsummer's Day, the day when quarterly payments are due and tenancies begin and end. Midsummer's Day was 24 June. Donne's reference in the letter to composing two problems, his "hawkings" in his "Surrey journies," is also consistent with dating the letter 1607. As Simpson has shown (see also Letter No. 42), Donne refers to his problems in several letters written about 1607. Moreover, as Simpson points out, Mitcham is in Surrey, and Donne's reference to his "Surrey journies" suggests that the letter "clearly belongs to the period of Donne's life at Mitcham" (Prose Works 147).

Donne uses conceits connecting motherhood with various ideas in his prose letters. Here he begins what must be one of the most elaborate conceits in the English language for such a commonplace topic: informing Goodyer that he has received all of his letters. In this conceit, Donne contends that the "understanding" is the "mother" of the letters and friendship the father. Friendship is understood to be a masculine virtue that acts on the understanding which is identified as feminine because it is passive. The letters themselves (the children) are unlike those of other generations because they have all arrived at the same time, including two written later than the rest ("twins at a latter conception"). Many of Donne's letters to Sir Henry Goodyer contain discussions of friendship, religion, and the purpose of letters, as this one does. See the General Introduction for discussions of these topics.

36

To the worthiest Lady, Mrs. Magdalen Herbert.

Madam,

EVery excuse hath in it somewhat of accusation; and since I am innocent, and yet must excuse, how shall I do for that part of accusing. By my troth, as desperate and perplexed men, grow from thence bold; so must I take the boldness of accusing you, who would draw so dark a Curtain betwixt me and your purposes, as that I had no glimmering, neither of your goings, nor the way which my Letters might haunt. Yet, I have given this Licence to Travel, but I know not whether, nor it. It is therefore rather a Pinnace to discover; and the intire Colony of Letters, of Hundreds and Fifties, must follow; whose employment is more honourable,

> than that which our State meditates to Virginia, because you are worthier than all that Countrey, of which that is a wretched inch; for you have better treasure, and a harmlessness. If this sound like a flattery, tear it out. I am to my Letters as rigid a Puritane, as Caesar was to his Wife. I can as ill endure a suspitious and misinterpretable word as a fault; but remember, that nothing is flattery which the Speaker believes; and of the grossest flatteries there is this good use, that they tell us what we should be. But, Madam, you are beyond instruction, and therefore there can belong to you only praise; of which, though you be no good hearer, yet allow all my Letters leave to have in them one part of it, which is thankfulness towards you.
>
> Your unworthiest Servant,
>
> Michin,
> July 11.
> 1607.
>
> Except your accepting
> have mended him,
> John Donne.

Source: Walton (Life of Herbert 141-42)

Collation

See Novarr, The Making of Walton's "Lives" (360-61), for a discussion of Walton's alterations to the texts of the Donne letters in various editions. Walton revised the letters by adding brief phrases to clarify Donne's meaning.

Notes

Pinnace] war ship's or other ship's small boat (O.E.D.)

Virginia] Donne pursued the position of secretary of the Virginia Company when it was reorganized in February 1608/9.

as rigid a Puritane, as Caesar was to his Wife] Donne wittily implies that he is sterner with his letters' morality than his own, as Caesar was to his wife.

Commentary

This letter and the letter immediately following it, according to Walton, were both written to Magdalen Herbert on July 11, 1607. Magdalen Herbert was the mother of George Herbert, who was also friendly with Donne in later years. Both letters contain an apology for some unidentified fault of Donne's, perhaps a failure to send the sonnets or some letters which he had promised her, or perhaps he missed a visit. Both letters also contain thanks for unidentified kindnesses to Donne. This letter promises an "intire Colony of Letters" to follow; hence, I place it before the other letter of July 11, 1607, and first in this sequence of four letters.

The four extant letters to Magdalen Herbert written in the summer of 1607 create an interesting problem: are Walton's specific dates correct? It is doubtful that they are. Donne refers in one of these letters to writing "almost daily" to Magdalen Herbert, and Walton claims to have many other letters from Donne to Magdalen Herbert which he does not print. These letters, therefore, should be considered as part of a larger sequence. Thus, the 23 July letter, for example, which states that it is the second of Donne's letters to Magdalen Herbert could be the second letter that Donne has written to her during a particular visit to London, and is not necessarily the second letter of these four, a position which would contradict the dates of the other two letters.

Another aspects of the problem of dating these letters precisely is the apparent conflict between the date and the day. Two of the letters are dated 11 July, which Grierson states was actually July 22, "making allowance for the difference between the Julian and Gregorian Calendars." July 22 was St. Mary Magdalen's Day, which Donne describes in one of these letters (the letter accompanying Donne's sonnet to Magdalen Herbert) as "this good day" (II: 228). Bald rejects the 11 July date for this letter on the grounds that 11 July 1607 was not a Sunday. That the letters were written sometime in the summer of 1607 is, however, fairly certain.

37

[To Lady Magdalen Herbert]

MADAM,

YOur Favours to me are every where; I use them, and have them. I enjoy them at London, *and leave them there; and yet, find them at* Micham: *Such Riddles as these, become things unexpressible; and, such is yourgoodness. I was almost sorry to find your Servant here this day, because I was loth to have any witness of my not coming home last Night, and indeed of my coming this Morning: But, my not coming was excusable, because earnest business detain'd me; and my coming this day, is by the example of your St*. Mary Magdalen, *who rose early upon* Sunday, *to seek that which she lov'd most, and so did I*. *And, from her and my self, I return such thanks as are due to one to whom we owe all the good opinion, that they whom we need most, have of us--By this Messenger, and on this good day, I commit the inclosed* Holy Hymns *and* Sonnets (*which for the matter, not the workmanship, have yet escap'd the fire) to your judgment, and to your protection too, if you think them worthy of it; and I have appointed this inclosed* Sonnet *to usher them to your happy hand*.

Your unworthiest Servant,
Micham, unless your accepting him,
July 11.
1607. have mended him.
Jo. Donne.

Source: Walton (*Life of Herbert* 24-25)

Notes

Micham]	Mitcham: Donne's residence until 1611 (Bald 158)
St. Mary Magdalen]	Magdalen Herbert's namesake. St. Mary Magdalen rose early on Sunday.

Commentary

This letter first appeared in Isaac Walton's *The Life of Mr. George Herbert*, 1670, and appears in subsequent editions of Walton's *Lives*, 1670, etc. The letter accompanies the sonnet "To the Lady Magdalen Herbert: Of St. Mary Magdalen" as well as some "Holy Hymns and Sonnets." Grierson (II: 228-29) conjectures that the "Holy Hymns and Sonnets" (which are referred to in both the prose letter and the sonnet) are the "La Corona" sonnets because the sonnet to Magdalen Herbert states that the "hymns" Donne is sending are addressed to Christ's "dear name," an "exact description" of the "La Corona" sonnet sequence, and a description which does not apply to any other set of Donne's divine poems. There has been some debate over the accuracy of the date of this letter. Gosse (I: 166-67) states that the date must be incorrect because another letter from Donne to Mrs. Herbert bears the same date. Grierson, however, points out that July 11 is "making allowance for the difference between the Julian and Gregorian Calendars, July 22, i.e., St. Mary Magdalen's Day, 'this good day'" (II: 228). This prose letter, then, helps date the "La Corona" sonnet sequence in 1607, and although, as Grierson states, his argument is conjectural, it is difficult to imagine a better interpretation of the evidence. Some critics have been reluctant to accept the date of the letter because it dates the "La Corona" sonnets earlier than previously believed. H. W. Garrod suggested a different date for the letter in his article "Donne and Mrs. Herbert," but later rejected his own suggestion. Bald (Life 181, n. 1) rejects the date in Walton because 11 July 1607 was not a Sunday. Gardner in the Elegies (252) suggests that an error was more likely to occur in the day of the week than the date of the letter. While no one directly addresses Grierson's explanation, Gardner, in the Divine Poems, accepts the date of July 11, 1607, and states that I. A. Shapiro also sees no reason to reject that date (56).

It is the enclosed sonnet "To the Lady Magdalen Herbert: of St. Mary Magdalen" that provides an introduction to the "La Corona" sonnet sequence which contains a carryover in technique to the verse sequence. The covering prose letter does make reference to an incident from the story of Mary Magdalen, and indicates that the day the letter was written is her saint's day. The techniques of this letter are similar to those of other prose letters. Donne thanks Magdalen Herbert for her many kindnesses, using the kind of paradox that he often uses in his prose and verse letters to the Countess of Bedford. He deprecates the sonnet sequence, using very similar language in a later prose letter to Sir Edward Herbert which was sent as a presentation letter accompanying his prose work "Biathanatos": Donne's personification of the enclosed sonnet as an usher for the sonnet sequence is a device repeated both in his prose letters and in the Songs and Sonets, where he often personifies his letters and poems as messengers.

38

To the worthiest Lady, Mrs. Magdalen Herbert.

Madam,

THis is my second Letter, in which though I cannot tell you what is good, yet this is the worst, that I must be a great part of it; yet to me, that is recompensed, because you must be mingled. After I knew you were gone (for I must, little less than accusingly tell you, I knew not you would go) I sent my first Letter, like a Bevis of Hampton, to seek Adventures. This day I came to Town, and to the best part of it, your House; for your memory, is a State-cloth and Presence; which I reverence, though you be away; though I need not seek that there, which I have about and within me. There, though I found my accusation, yet any thing to which your hand is, is a pardon; yet I would not burn my first Letter because as in great destiny no small passage can be omitted or frustrated, so in my resolution of writing almost daily to you, I would have no link of the Chain broke by me, both because my Letters interpret one another, and because only their number can give them weight. If I had your Commission and Instructions to do you the service of a Legier Ambassadour here, I could say something of the Countess of Devon: of the States, and such things. But since to you, who are not only a World alone, but the Monarchy of the World your self nothing can be added, especially by me; I will sustain my self with the honour of being

London, Your Servant Extraordinary,
July 23.
1607.

And without place,
John Donne.

Source: Walton (Life of Herbert 143-44)

Notes

Bevis of Hampton] a popular verse romance of the early fourteenth century. Bevis, the son of the Earl of Southampton, is sold as a slave by his mother and the murderer of his father, Mordure, son of the Emperor of Germany. Bevis is given to the King of Armenia, who offers him his daughter Josian as a wife. Bevis is imprisoned, Josian is married twice to other men, but finally Bevis rescues her and defeats his enemies, and the couple return to the East.

State-cloth and Presence] (fig. of a thing as in bed or chair of state); to be of importance; to involve great consequences (O.E.D.). The state-cloth is a royal trapping, and Donne later in the letter describes himself as a potential ambassador for Magdalen Herbert and describes her as the Monarchy of the World.

Legier Ambassadour] the ordinary resident ambassador who usually served a term of two or three years during which he attended to ordinary diplomacy. The "legier" ambassador was still a relatively new phenomenon when James became King and had been adopted reluctantly by European countries during the sixteenth century. Sir Henry Wotton defined an ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country," punning on the contemporary use of "to lie" as a synonym for "to reside" (Akrigg 63). Wotton's cleverness got him into trouble with King James because Wotton was Ambassador to Venice at the time, and his remark was used against both him and James. Wotton wrote his inscription in 1604; he was not attacked for it until 1612 (Smith I: 126-27). Donne's use of the term has to do with his rank with respect to Magdalen (ordinary ambassadors were of much lower rank than extraordinary ambassadors were) and might also imply that he is refraining from gossip because Magdalen Herbert will be aware of virtue and not interested in vice.

the Countess of Devon:]	the Countess of Devonshire
the States]	the low countries? the Holy Roman Empire?

Commentary

This letter, like the first in the series of letters to Magdalen Herbert, compares the letter's journey to a heroic mission of adventure and exploration. In both letters Donne attempts to "excuse" himself for some unidentified fault by "accusing" Magdalen Herbert of not informing Donne of her movements. This letter begins with a difficult sentence: Donne states that he cannot tell Magdalen Herbert what is good in this letter (i.e., he has no good news), but the worst aspect of the letter is that Donne himself is a part of it. He regrets that he has nothing worthwhile to write to Magdalen Herbert and that he must be a part of this "worthless" letter. Donne goes on, however, to say that he is "recompensed" because her receiving the letter "mingles" her goodness with the letter and makes the letter and Donne worthy. This last conceit is reminiscent of Donne's poem "The Flea" in its ingenious attempts to link Donne with Magdalen Herbert.

39

To the worthiest Lady, Mrs.
Magdalen Herbert.

Madam,

AS we must dye before we can have full glory and happiness, so before I can have this degree of it, as to see you by a Letter, I must almost dye, that is, come to London, to plaguy London; a place full of danger, and vanity, and vice, though the Court be gone. And such it will be, till your return redeem it: Not that, the greatest vertue in the World, which is you, can be such a Marshal, as to defeat, or disperse all the vice of this place; but as higher bodies remove, or contract themselves when better come, so at your return we shall have one door open to innocence. Yet Madam, you are not such an Ireland, as produceth neither ill, nor good, no Spiders, nor Nightingales, which is a rare degree of perfection: But you have found and practised that experiment, That even nature, out of her detesting of emptiness, if we will make that our work, to remove bad, will fill us with good things To abstain from it, was therefore but the Childhood, and Minority of your Soul, which hath been long exercised since, in your manlier active part, of doing good. Of which since I have been a witness and subject; not to tell you some times, that by your influence and example I have attained to such a step of goodness, as to be thankful, were both to accuse your power and judgement of impotency and infirmity.

August 2d. Your Ladiships in all Services,
1607.

John Donne.

Source: Walton (Life of Herbert 145-46)

Notes

plaguy London] The plague was disastrous in 1603 (over 30,000 deaths), let up in 1604 and 1605, and grew moderately severe from 1606 to 1608 (over 2,000 deaths a year). See F. P. Wilson, The Plague in Shakespeare's London (118-19).

You are not such an Ireland] The comparison of Magdalen Herbert to a marshall who conquers vice suggests to Donne the reconquest of Ireland, which was completed in 1603, and which is mentioned in a number of Donne's earlier letters.

Commentary

The four letters to Magdalen Herbert printed by Walton and dated in the summer of 1607 contain similar conceits to those in the prose and verse letters written to the Countess of Bedford in 1607 and 1608. This letter is perhaps the best example. Donne describes virtue as leaving London with Magdalen Herbert's departure, as he does when the Countess of Bedford leaves London. Both ladies are the "greatest vertue" in the world; both ladies are an example of virtue to Donne or a "door open to innocence," as he states in this letter. Moreover, both ladies embody an active manly virtue, not simply the passive virtue expected of women. As in other of Donne's earlier letters, he mentions the prevalence of vice and vanity.

40

To S^{r} H.G. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

IN the history or stile of friendship, which is best written both in deeds and words, a letter which is of a mixed nature, and hath something of both is a mixt parenthesis: It may be left out, yet it contributes, though not to the beeing, yet to the verdure, and freshnesse thereof. Letters have truly the same office, as oathes. As these amongst light and empty men, are but fillings, and pauses, and interjections: but with waightier, they are sad attestations: So are letters, to some complement, and obligation to others. For mine, as I never authorized my servant to lye in my behalfe (for if it were officious in him, it might be worse in mee) so I allow my letters much lesse that civill dishonesty, both because they goe from mee more considerately, and because they are permanent, for in them I may speake to you in your chamber a yeare hence before I know not whom, and not heare my selfe. They shall therefore ever keepe the sincerity and intemeratenesse of the fountaine whence they are derived. And as wheresoever these leaves fall, the root is in my heart, so shall they, as that sucks good affections towards you there, have ever true impressions thereof. Thus much information is in very leaves, that they can tell what the tree is, and these can tell you I am a friend and an honest man. Of what generall use, the fruit should speake, and I have none: and of what particular profit to you, your application and experimenting should tell you, and you can make none of such a nothing; Yet even of barren Sicamores, such as I, there were use, if either any light flashings, or scorching vehemencies, or sudden showers made you need so shadowie an example or Remembrancer. But (Sir) your fortune and minde do you this happy injury, that they make all kinde of fruits uselesse unto you; Therefore I have placed my love wisely where I need communicate nothing.

All this, though perchance you reade it not till Michaelmas, was told you at Michin. 15. Aug. 1607.

Source: Poems 1633 (362-63)

Collation

Poems: 1633, 35, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

Letters: 1651, 54

Title: *To S^{r}* H.G. 1633 pp. 362-63
1719 pp. 246-47

To Sir H.G. 1635, 39 pp. 292-93
1649-54 pp. 281-82

To Sir H.G. *Letters* 1651, 54 pp. 114-16
1669 pp. 277-8

SIR] *Sir* 1651, 54 1719

l. 1 history] History 1651, 54 stile] style 1651, 54

l. 2 letter] Letter 1651, 54 letter, 1719

l. 3 mixed] mixt 1719 both] both, 1649-54, 1651, 54 1719

l. 4 mixt] mixed 1651, 54 parenthesis] Parenthesis 1651, 54 1719
out,] out; 1719

l. 5 beeing] being 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 6 freshnesse] freshness 1654-1719 truly] truely 1635, 39

l. 7 oathes.] oaths. 1651, 54 1669 oaths: 1719
empty] emptie 1635, 39

l. 8 men,] men 1719 interjections:] interjections; 1651, 54 1719

l. 9 waightier] weightier 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 10 letters,] letters 1649-1719 Letters 1651, 54
complement] compliment 1719

l. 11 lye] lie 1635-54 1651, 54 ly 1669

l. 12 behalfe] behalfe, 1649-50 1651, 54 behalf, 1654-1719

l. 13 mee] me 1649-69 1651, 54 me; 1719
letters] Letters 1651, 54
lesse] less 1651, 54 1669 1719

l. 14 civill] civil 1635-1719 goe] go 1649-54 1651, 54 1719
mee] me 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 15 permanent,] permanent; 1651, 54 1719

l. 16 speake] speak 1649-1719 1651, 54
yeare[year 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 17 hence] hence, 1719 heare] hear 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 18 selfe] self 1651, 54 1669 keepe] keep 1649-1719 1651, 54
sincerity] sinceritie 1635, 39

l. 19 intemeratenesse] intemerateness 1669 1719
fountaine] fountain, 1635 1649-1719 fountain. 1639

l. 20 derived.] derived; 1635 as] as, 1719

l. 21 root] roote 1635, 39 heart,] heart; 1719

l. 22 towards] toward 1719

l. 23 much] much of 1719

l. 24 is,] is; 1719

l. 25 friend] friend, 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 26 speake] speak 1669 1719 none:] none; 1719

l. 29 nothing;] nothing: 1719 Yet] yet 1635-1719 1651, 54
Sicamores] Sycamores 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 31 showers] showres 1635-54 1651, 54 showrs 1669

l. 32 shadowie] shadowy 1635-1719 1651, 54 example] Example 1719
Remembrancer] remembrancer 1651, 54

l. 33 minde] mind 1719 do] doe 1649-54

l. 34 kinde] kind 1719

l. 35 wisely] wisely, 1719

l. 37 reade] read 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 38 Michaelmas] *Michaelmas* 1651, 54 Michin.] *Micham*, 1651, 54
Mitcham, 1719 15.] 15, 1635 15 1719
Aug.] *Aug*. 1649-1719 *August*. 1651, 54

Notes

l. 19 intemeratenesse: inviolate, undefiled, unblemished (*O.E.D*. 1491)

l. 31 vehemencies: impetuosity, great force or violence of physical action or agents (*O.E.D*. 1542)

l. 32 Remembrancer: one who reminds another especially one engaged or appointed for that purpose (*O.E.D*. 1523)

l. 38 Michaelmas: the feast of St. Michael, 29 September (old style), an English quarter day. Since 1900 Michaelmas has been 12 October (O.E.D.).

Commentary

This letter is both addressed and dated, which puts it in a minority among the Donne letters published in the seventeenth century. It was first published in the 1633 Poems. Gosse (I: 168) suggests that this letter is the first of a series of regular weekly letters that Donne wrote to Goodyer. It is a homily about letters and their relationship to friendship, and continues discussions about both these subjects from Donne's previous letter to Goodyer. Both letters rely on the elaborate development of a conceit more than their matter. Whereas in the previous letter Goodyer's letters were children, here Donne's letters are first drops from a fountain and then leaves. Donne develops the latter conceit even more thoroughly than he did his comparison of Goodyer's leaves and children. Donne is a barren sycamore, a tree which provides no fruit and offers no shade: in short, a friend incapable of materially helping Goodyer. Nevertheless, the leaves (Donne's letters) carry a true impression of his roots (his heart), which is full of honest affection for Goodyer.

41

To my honoured friend S T. Lucey.
[To Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Make account that this writing of letters, when it is with any seriousness, is a kind of extasie, and a departure and secession and suspension of the soul, w^{ch} doth then comunicate it self to two bodies: And as I would every day provide for my souls last convoy, though I know not when I shall die, and perchance I shall never die; so for these extasies in letters, I oftentimes deliver my self over in writing when I know not when those letters shall be sent to you, and many times they never are, for I have a little satisfaction in seeing a letter written to you upon my table, though I meet no opportunity of sending it. Especially this summer, when either by my early retiring home, or your irresolutions of your own purposes, or some other possessions of yours you did lesse reveale to me your progresses, and stations, and where I might crosse you by letters, then heretofore: I make shift to lay little fault upon you, because my pardon might be easier, if I transgress into a longer and busier letter then your Countrey sports admit; but you may read it in winter: And by that time I may more clearly express my self for those things which have entred into me, concerning your soul: for as the greatest advantage which mans soul is thought to have beyond others, is that which they call *Actum reflexum*, and *iteratum*, (for Beasts do the same things as we do, but they do not consider nor remember the circumstances and inducements; and by what power, and faculty, it is that they do them) so of those which they call *Actum reflexum* the noblest is that which reflects upon the soul itself, and considers and meditates it, Into which consideration when I walke after my slow and unperfect pace, I begin to think that as litigious men tyred with suits, admit any arbitrement; and Princes travailed with long and wastfull war, descend to such conditions of peace, as they are soon after ashamed to have embraced: so Philosophers, and so all sects of Christians, after long disputations and controversies, have allowed many things for positive and dogmaticall truths which are not worthy of that dignity; And so many doctrines have grown to be the ordinary diet and food of our spirits, and have place in the pap of Catechismes, which were admitted but as Physick in that present distemper, or accepted in a lazie weariness, when men, so they might have something to relie upon, and to excuse themselves from more painfull inquisition, never examined what that was. To what indisposition of ours, the Casuists are so indulgent, as that they allow a conscience to adhere to any probable opinion against a more probable, and do never binde him to seek out which is the more probable, but give him leave to dissemble it and to depart from it, if by mischance he come to know it. This, as it appears in all sciences, so most manifestly in Physick, which for a long time considering nothing, but plain curing and that but by example and precedent, the world at last longed for some certain Canons and Rules, how these cures might be accomplished; And when men are inflamed with this desire and that such a fire breaks out that rages and consumes infinitly by heat of argument, except some of authority interpose. This produced Hippocrates his Aphorismes; and the world slumbred or took breath, in his resolution divers hundreds of years: And then in Galens time, which was not satisfied with the effect of curing, nor with the knowledge how to cure, broke out another desire of finding out the causes why those simples wrought those effects. Then Galen rather to stay their stomachs then that he gave them enough, taught them the qualities of the four Elements, and arrested them upon this, that all differences of qualities proceeded from them. And after, (not much before our time) men perceiving that all effects in Physick could not be derived form [from] these beggerly and impotent properties of the Elements, and that therefore they were driven often to that miserable refuge of specifique form, and of antipathy and sympathy, we see the world hath turned upon new principles which are attributed to Paracelsus, but (indeed) too much to his honour. Certainly it is also so in the Physick of our soul Divinity, for in the Primitive Church, when amongst the Fathers there were so divers opinions of the state of the soul, presently after this life, they easily inclined to be content to do as much for them dead as when they were alive, and so concurred in a charitable disposition to pray for them; which manner of prayer then in use, no Christian Church at this day having received better light, will allow of. So also when in the beginning of S. Augustines time, Grace had been so much advanced that mans Nature was scarce admitted to be so much as any means or instrument (not onely no kinde of cause) of his own good works: And soon after in S. Augustines time also mans free will (by fierce opposition and arguing against the former error) was too much overvalued, and admitted into too near degrees of fellowship with Grace; those times admitted a doctrine and form of reconciliation, which though for reverence to the time, both the Dominicans and Jesuits at this day in their great quarrell about Grace and Free will would yet seem to maintaine, yet indifferent and dispassioned men of that Church see there is no possibility in it, and therefore accuse it of absurdity and almost of heresie. I think it falls out thus also in the matter of the soul: for Christian Religion presuming a soul, and intending principally her happiness in the life to come, hath been content to accept any way which hath been obtruded; how this soul is begun in us. Hence it is that whole Christian Churches arest themselves upon propagation from parents; and other whole Christian Churches allow onely infusion from God. In both which opinions there appear such infirmities as it is time to look for a better: for whosoever will adhere to the way of propagation, can never evict necessarily and certainly a naturall immortality in the soul, if the soul result out of matter, nor shall he ever prove that all mankind hath any more then one soul: as certainly of all beasts, if they receive such souls as they have from their parents, every species can have but one soul. And they which follow the opinion of infusion from God, and of a new creation (which is now the more common opinion) as they can very hardly defend the doctrin of original sin (the soul is forced to take this infection, and comes not into the body of her own disposition) so shall they never be able to prove that all those whom we see in the shape of men have an immortall and reasonable soul, because our parents are as able as any other species is to give us a soul of growth and of sense, and to perform all vitall and animall functions. And so without infusion of such a soul may produce a creature as wise and well disposed as any horse or Elephant, of which degree many whom we see come far short; nor hath God bound or declared himself that he will always create a soul for every embryon, there is yet therefore no opinion in Philosophy, nor Divinity, so well established as constrains us to beleeve, both that the soul is immortall, and that every particular man hath such a soul: which since out of the great mercy of our God we do constantly beleeve, I am ashamed that we do not also know it by searching farther: But as sometimes we had rather beleeve a Travellers lie then go to disprove him; so men rather cleave to these ways then seek new: yet because I have meditated therein, I will shortly aquaint you with what I think; for I would not be in danger of that law of Moses, That if a man dig a pit, and cover it not, he must recompense those which are damnified by it: which is often interpreted of such as shake old opinions, and do not establish new as certain, but leave consciences in a worse danger then they found them in. I beleeve that law of Moses hath in it some mysterie and appliablenesse; for by that law men are onely then bound to that indemnity and compensation, if an Oxe or an Asse (that is, such as are of a strong constitution and accustomed to labour) fall therein; but it is not said so, if a Sheep or a Goat fall: no more are we, if men in a sillinesse or wantonnesse will stumble or take a scandall, bound to rectifie them at all times. And therefore because I justly presume you strong and watchfull enough, I make account that I am not obnoxious to that law, since my meditations are neither too wide nor too deep for you, except onely that my way of expressing them may be

extended beyond your patience and pardon,
which I will therefore tempt no longer at
this time.

From Micham, my close prison ever since I saw you, 9 Octob.

Your very affectionate friend
and servant and lover

I. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 6 (11-19)

Also in Gosse (I: 173-79)

Transcription Notes

l. 93 form: from

Commentary

R. E. Bennett in "Donne's Letters from the Continent in 1611-12" identifies this letter as one having been written to Sir Henry Goodyer because the content suggests that it is "one of several of Donne's efforts to encourage Goodere to be constant in his religion" (75, n. 40). Goodyer and Donne were both friends of Sir Tobie Mathew, who converted to Catholicism and attempted to convert Goodyer. Mathew transferred some property to Goodyer to avoid its confiscation. Goodyer also held property for another recusant family.

Sir Thomas Lucy was the son of Constantia Kingsmill, whose family was friendly with Donne (and who, as Bennett points out, Donne's son was obviously trying to please in the Letters). Gosse states that it "is possible that Donne had been employed to read with Sir Thomas Lucy, who was intimate with the Herberts." But, as Gosse indicates, Sir Thomas Lucy was not much more than twenty years of age at this time, and highly unlikely to have been the person for whom Donne had written the many letters that he indicates he has at the beginning of this letter.

Goodyer, to whom Donne wrote more letters than to any other correspondent, must have been the recipient of this letter.

The beginning of this letter, which describes writing letters as a kind of "extasie," is an idea that Donne uses in the poem "The Extasie." Grierson (II: 42) uses the letter to gloss the poem and adds the following explanation:

> Ecstasy in Neo-Platonic philosophy was the state of mind in which the soul, escaping from the body, attained to the vision of God, the One, the Absolute. Plotinus thus describes it: "Even the word vision (θέαμα) does not seem appropriate here. It is rather an ecstasy (ἔκστασις), a simplification, an abandonment of self, a perfect quietude (στάσις), a desire of contact, in short a wish to merge oneself in that which one contemplates in the Sanctuary." (*Sixth Ennead*, ix.II [from the French translation of Bouillet, 1857-58])

Grierson suggests that Donne's poem closely follows Plotinus's description. The doctrine of ecstasy was also connected in Christian thought with the experience of St. Paul (2 Cor. 12:2) (Grierson II: 42).

Like Donne's other most extravagant claims for the elevated spirituality associated with writing letters to friends, this one is grounded in a paradoxical rhetorical context. Donne is telling Goodyer that he has not sent many letters this summer because he has not known Goodyer's whereabouts. Donne states that he has written more letters than he has actually sent and that often these letters remain on a table waiting to be sent. Merely having written the letters, however, has provided Donne with some satisfaction. Donne's actual situation parallels the Neo-platonic conception of ecstacy because while writing the letters to Goodyer he abandons his self and fulfills his desire for contact with the object of contemplation--Goodyer. This elaborate conceit, while flattering Goodyer, also offers him an oblique apology for the few letters that Donne has sent during the summer.

Most of this letter deals with how men come to hold wrong opinions about theological matters. Donne's discussion is tactful and sympathetic. He begins by suggesting that errors are caused by the tendency of all men to be satisfied with dogmatic truths because these are easier to live with than a perpetual seeking of truth. He demonstrates this view first by tracing the history of medicine from classical times up to the most famous physician of his day, Paracelsus, and then discussing the history of religion. Donne's view of the history of both fields is essentially dialectical: he sees one idea dominating and then being replaced by another, until finally a balanced perspective of the two ideas is achieved. Donne concludes this letter with a discussion of the "Law of Moses," from which he concludes that men who create theological "pits" or traps are not responsible for the damnation of those who fall into them out of silliness or wantonness in religious matters. Donne concludes that because he knows Goodyer is strong and watchful; he need not worry about what he has said to Goodyer. Donne's discussion can be seen as a warning to Goodyer to suspect any attempt by Sir Tobie Mathew or anyone else to proselytize him, first, by showing that dogmatic positions in religious controversies have always been changed over time, and second, that these are pitfalls that may trap the unwary into damnation.

For a discussion of the controversy over how the soul is begun in man which Donne discusses in this letter, Jessop (quoted in Gosse, I: 177) refers to a summary of it in Pererius' Commentary on Genesis (II: 7).

42

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

NAture hath made al bodies like, by mingling and kneading up the same elements in every one. And amongst me, the other nature, custome, hath made every mind like some other. We are patternes or copies, we inform, or imitate. But as he hath not presently attain'd to write a good hand, which hath equaled one excellent master in his A, another in his B, much lesse hee which hath sought all the excellent masters, and employed all his time to exceede in one letter, because not so much an excellency of any nor every one, as an evennesse and proportion, and respect to one another gives the perfection; So is no man vertuous by particular example. Not he which doth all actions to the patterne of the most valiant, or liberall, which Histories afford: Nor he which chuses from every one their best actions, and therupon doth something like those. Perchance such may bee in via perficiendorum, which Divines allow to Monasticall life, but not Perfectorum, which, by them, is only due to prelacy; For vertue is even, and continuall, and the same, and can therefore breake no where, nor admit ends, nor beginnings; It is not only not broken, but not tyed together. He is not vertuous, out of whose actions you can pick an excellent one. Vice and her fruits may be seene, because they are thick bodies, but not vertue, which is all light. And vices have swellings and fits, and noise, because being extremes, they dwel far asunder, and they maintaine both a foraine warre against vertue, and a civill against one another, and affect soveraignty, as vertue doth society. The later Physitians say, that when our naturall inborne preservative is corrupted or wasted, and must be restored by alike extracted from other bodies, the chiefe care is, that the mummy have in it no excelling quality, but an equally digested temper: And such is true vertue. But men who have preferred money before all, thinke they deale honourably with vertue, if they compare her with money: And think, that as mony is not called base, til the allay exceed the pure; So they are vertuous enough, if they have enough to make their actions currant, which is, if either they get praise, or (in a lower abasing) if they incurre not infamy or penalty. But you know who said Angusta innocentia est ad legem bonum esse, which rule being given for positive lawes, severe mistakers apply even to Gods law, and (perchance against his commandement) binde themselves to his counsailes, beyond his lawes. But they are worse, that think that because some men formerly wastfull, live better with halfe their rents then they did with all, being now advantaged with discretion and experience, therefore our times need lesse morall vertue then the first, because we have Christianity, which is the use and application of all vertue. As though our religion were but an art of thrift, to make a little vertue goe far. For as plentifull springs are fittest, and best become large Aqueducts, so doth much vertue such a steward and officer as a Christian. But I must not give you a Homily for a letter. I said a great while since, that custome made men like; We who have beene accustomed to one another are like in this, that we love not businesse. This therefore shall not be to you nor me a busie letter. I end with a probleme, whose errand is, to aske for his fellowes. I pray before you ingulfe your selfe in the Progresse, leave them for mee, and such other of my papers as you will lend mee till your returne. And besides this allegoricall lending, lend me truly your counsells. And love God and me, whilest I love him and you.

Source: *Poems*, 1633 (356-58)

Collation

Poems: 1633, 35, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

Letters: 1651, 54

Title: *To Sir H.G.* 1633 pp. 356-58
1635, 1639 pp. 281-83
1649-1654 pp. 271-73
1669 pp. 269-71
Letters 1651, 54 pp. 96-99

To Sir H.G. 1719 pp. 238-40

Sir,] *SIR* 1651, 54

l. 1 al] all 1635-69 1651, 54 like] alike 1651, 54
and] & 1635 1649-54

l. 2 elements] elemets 1635, 1639 eleme*n*ts 1649-54

l. 3 amo*n*gst] amongst 1651, 54 1669 me*n*] men 1639-69 1651, 54
custo*m*e] custome 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 4 mind] minde 1635-54 1651, 54 other.] other, 1651, 54
We] we 1651, 54 patternes] patterns 1635-69
patterns 1651, 54

l. 5 inform,] inform 1635-69 informe 1651, 54
prese*n*tly] presently 1635-69 1651, 54
attain'd] attained 1651, 54

l. 6 equaled] equalled 1639-69 1651, 54

l. 7 master] Master 1639-69 1651, 54 A] *A* 1651, 54
B] *B* 1651, 54 lesse] less 1669 hee] he 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 8 all] al 1635 masters] Masters 1651, 54
and] & 1635, 39, 50, 54 employed] imployed 1651, 54

l. 9 exceede] exceed 1635-69 1651, 54 letter] Letter 1651, 54

l. 10 any] any, 1651, 54

l. 12 perfection;] perfection: 1651, 54 So] so 1651, 54

l. 13 which] that 1651, 54

l. 14 patterne] pattern 1649-69 1651, 54

l. 15 Nor] nor 1651, 54 which] w^{ch} 1635-54
from] fro*m* 1635-54

l. 16 and] & 1635-54 therupon] thereupon 1649-69 1651, 54

l. 17 bee] be 1635-69 1651, 54
perficiendorum] *perficiendorũ* 1635 1649-54

l. 18 *Perfectorum*] *Perfectorũ* 1635-54 *perfectorum* 1651, 54

l. 19 which,] which 1651, 54 them,] them 1635-49 1651, 54
only] onely 1654 prelacy;] Prelacie; 1635-49
Prelacy, 1650 Prelacy; 1654, 69 Prelacy. 1651, 54

l. 20 and] & 1650, 54 continuall] continual 1669

l. 21 breake] break 1649-69 1651, 54
beginnings;] beginnings: 1651, 54 It] it 1651, 54

l. 22 only] onely 1635-69

l. 24 seene] seen 1651, 54 1669

l. 25 vertue] virtue 1669 light.] light; 1651, 54

l. 26 And] and 1651, 54

l. 27 extremes] extreams 1635-69 1651, 54
dwel] dwell 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 28 maintaine] maintain 1651, 54 foraine] forraine 1635, 39
foraigne 1649 forraigne 1650, 54 forraign 1669
forein Letters warre] war 1649-69 1651, 54
civill] civil 1669

l. 29 soveraignty] Soveraignty 1651, 54

l. 30 say,] say 1649, 54

l. 31 inborne] inborn 1651, 54 1719

l. 32 alike] a like 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 33 bodies,] bodies; 1651, 54 chiefe] chief 1650-54 1651, 54

is,] is; 1635 is 1651, 54 mummy] Mummy 1651, 54
l. 36 thinke] think 1651, 54 1669 deale] deal 1651, 54 1669

l. 37 money] mony 1635-69

l. 38 think,] think 1651, 54 mony] money 1651, 54
til] till 1635-49 1651, 54

l. 39 pure;] pure: 1635-69 So] so 1651, 54

l. 42 incurre] incurr 1669

l. 43 said] said, 1650-54 1651, 54 esse,] esse; 1651, 54

l. 44 lawes] laws 1669 Laws 1651, 54

l. 45 law] Law 1651, 54

l. 46 commandement] commandment 1669 Commandment 1651, 54
binde] bind 1669 counsailes] counsels 1649-69
Counsails 1651, 54

l. 47 lawes] laws 1669 Laws 1651, 54
think] thinke 1635-54 1651, 54

l. 48 wastfull] wasteful 1669

l. 49 halfe] half 1651, 54 rents] rents, 1635-54
then] than 1635, 39, 69

l. 51 lesse] less 1669 morall] moral 1669 vertue] virtue 1669
then] than 1654, 69

l. 52 Christianity] Christianitie 1635, 39
application] application 1635

l. 53 vertue.] vertue 1651, 54 As] as 1651, 54
religion] religion 1635

l. 54 goe] go 1651, 54 far] farre 1635-54 farr 1669

l. 57 Christian] Christian 1635

l. 58 letter.] letter, 1649-69 Letter. 1651, 54

custome] custom 1669

l. 59 We] we 1651, 54 beene] been 1649, 54, 69 1651, 54

l. 60 businesse.] busines. 1635 business. 1669
businesse: 1651, 54

l. 61 This] this 1651, 54 busie] busy 1669
letter] Letter 1651, 54

l. 62 probleme] Probleme 1639-69 aske] ask 1669

l. 63 followes] follows 1669 in gulfe] ingulf 1669
selfe] self 1649-69 1651, 54

l. 64 Progresse] Progress 1669 progresse 1651, 54
mee] me 1649-69

l. 65 mee] me 1635-69 1651, 54 returne] return 1651, 54 1669

l. 66 truly] truely 1635 1651, 54

l. 67 counsells.] counsels. 1635, 39, 49, 69
counsails, 1651, 54 And] and 1651, 54 me,] me 1649-54
whilest] whilst 1669

Notes

l. 17 in via perficiendorum: in the way of those striving for perfection

l. 18 Perfectorum: the perfect ones

l. 19 prelacy: (1) the office, position, or dignity of a prelate, a prelatic benefice or see; (2) the order or ranks of prelates; the body of prelates or of bishops collectively (O.E.D. 1577)

l. 43 Angusta innocentia est ad legem bonum esse: to be good in accordance with the law is narrow innocence.

Commentary

This letter is dated by Gosse (I: 171-80) between October 9, 1607, and March 15, 1608. These are the dates of two letters (Nos. 41 and 44) that have similarities which suggest to Gosse that the three belong to the same period of Donne's life. Merrill (289) suggests that some expressions in the letter imply that Donne had already taken orders and therefore the letter could not be earlier than 1615. However, Donne's other letters and poems at this time show a stronger interest in religious matters than is sometimes credited to him. See the commentary to his letter of July 11, 1607, to Magdalen Herbert. Hester (xviii) places the letter in late 1607. Bald does not discuss this letter but Evelyn Simpson agrees with Gosse that the letter was written about 1607. Her evidence for choosing this date is based on Donne's request for the return of some of his problems: "I end with a probleme, whose errand is to aske for his fellowes." Simpson shows that Donne's problems were written later than previously thought. Specifically, she shows that Problem 8 was written as late as 1606 (Prose Works 147) and several of Donne's other letters written while he lived at Mitcham refer to writing problems. Peters suggests in the 1980 edition of Donne's Paradoxes and Problems (xlv) that the latest possible date for most of Donne's problems was 1609 or 1610.

If Gosse is correct in assuming that this letter follows Letters No. 6, Donne's discussion of virtue in this letter must be the continuation of the discussion about the soul that he promises in that letter when he says, "yet because I have meditated therein, I will shortly acquaint you with what I think" (Letters No. 6). Donne's conception of virtue expressed in this letter is of central importance not only for his view of morality, which is the predominant subject of his verse letters to both men and women (see Milgate xxxiii-xl), but also for his underlying conception of the soul and therefore of much of his religious thought.

43

SIR,

THough my friendship be good for nothing else, it may give you the profit of a tentation, or of an affliction: It may excuse your patience; and though it cannot allure, it shall importune you. Though I know you have many worthy friends of all rankes, yet I adde something, since I which am of none, would fain be your friend too. There is some of the honour and some of the degrees of a Creation, to make a friendship of nothing. Yet, not to annihilate my self utterly (for though it seem humblenesse, yet it is a work of as much almightinesse, to bring a thing to nothing, as from nothing) though I be not of the best stuffe for friendship, which men of warm and durable fortunes only are, I cannot say, that I am not of the best fashion, if truth and honesty be that; which I must ever exercise, towards you, because I learned it of you: for the conversation with worthy men, and of good example, (though it sow not vertue in us, yet produceth and ripeneth it. Your mans haste, and mine to Micham cuts off this Letter here, yet, as in littell paterns torn from a whole piece, this may tell you what all I am. Though by taking me before my day (which I accounted Tuesday) I make short payment of this duty of Letters, yet I have a little comfort in this, that you see me hereby, willing to pay those debts which I can, before my time.

First Saturday in March 1607 — Your affectionate friend
J. Donne.

You forget to send me the Apology, and many times, I think it an injury to remember one of a promise, lest

> it confesse a distrust. But of the book, by occasion of reading the Deans answer to it, I have sometimes some want.

Source: Letters No. 22 (65-66)

Also in Gosse (I: 181)

Commentary

Although this letter is not addressed to anyone in the Letters, it is clearly to Sir Henry Goodyer because in it Donne refers to his custom of writing every Tuesday, which he did only to Goodyer. Donne's description of himself as a nothing is repeated in various ways in other letters to Goodyer (see Nos. 35, 40, 43, 57, 58, 63, 64, 66, 72, 74, 104, 120, 166, 168, 222), as well as in verse letters to the Countess of Bedford, and "A Nocturnall" in the "Songs and Sonnets." "The Apology," which Donne asks Goodyer to return in the postscript, was probably John Brerely's Apologie of the Romane Church, 1604. "John Brerely" was the pseudonym of Lawrence Anderton, a seminary priest who later became a Jesuit (Bald, Life 204). The "Dean" was Thomas Morton, who became Dean of Gloucester the previous June (22 June 1607) (Bald, Life 205). Morton did not complete his reply to Brerely until near the end of 1609 when his A Catholike Appeale for Protestants, out of the confessions of the Roman Doctors, particularly answering the misnamed Catholike Apologie for the Romane Faith was published. Bald disagrees with Jessop, and Gosse, who both thought that Donne was (in Bald's words) "systematically employed by Morton." Bald quotes this letter, but considers it an example of Donne's friendly help rather than full-time employment (Bald, Life 211-12).

44

To the best Knight Sir H. Wootton
[Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

WHen I saw your good Countesse last, she let me think that her message by her foot-man would hasten you up. And it furthered that opinion in me, when I knew how near M. Mathews day of departing this kingdome was. To counterpoyse both these, I have a little Letter from you brought to me to Micham yesterday, but left at my lodging two days sooner: and because that speaks nothing of your return, I am content to be perplexed in it: and as in all other, so in this perplexity to do that which is safest. To me it is safest to write, because it performes a duty, and leaves my conscience well: and though it seem not safest for the Letter, which may perish, yet I remember, that in the Crociate for the warres in the Holy Land, and so in all Pilgrimages enterprised in devotion, he which dies in the way, enjoyes all the benefit and indulgences which the end did afford. Howsoever, all that can encrease the danger of your Letter, encrease my merit; for, as where they immolate men, it is a scanter devotion, to sacrifice one of many slaves or of many children, or an onely child, then to beget and bring up one purposely to sacrifice it, so if I ordain this Letter purposely for destruction, it is the largest expressing of that kinde of piety, and I am easie to beleeve (because I wish it) your hast hither: Not that I can fear any slacknesse in that business which drew you down, because your fortune and honour are a paire of good spurs to it; but here also you have both true businesse and many Quasi negotia, which go two and two to a businesse; which are visitations, and such, as though they be not full businesses, yet are so near them that they serve as for excuses, in omissions of the other. As when abjurations was in use in this land, the State and law was satisfied if the abjuror came to the sea side, and waded into the sea, when windes and tydes resisted, so we think our selves justly excusable to our friends and our selves, if when we should do businesse, we come to the place of businesse, as Courts and the houses of great Princes and officers. I do not so much intimate your infirmity in this, as frankly confesse mine own. The master of Latine language says, *Oculi & aures aliorum te speculantur & custodiunt*. So those two words are synonimous, & only the observation of others upon me, is my preservation from extream idlenesse, else I professe, that I hate businesse so much, as I am sometimes glad to remember, that the *Roman Church* reads that verse *A negotio perambulante in tenebris*, which we reade from the pestilence walking by night, so equall to me do the plague and businesse deserve avoiding, but you will neither beleeve that I abhor businesse, if I inlarge this Letter, nor that I would afford you that ease which I affect, Therefore returne to your pleasures.

Your unprofitablest friend
March 14. 1607. Jo. Donne.

It is my third Letter: which I tell you, because I found not M^r^. Rogers, *but left the letter which I sent last, with a stranger at* Cliffords Inne.

Source: *Letters* No. 45 (140-43)

Also in Gosse (I: 179)

Notes

1. 8	*Micham*: Mitcham
1. 18	Crociate: (med. Latin) Crusade (*O.E.D.*)
1. 37	*Quasi negotia*: quasi business (almost business or business like)
1. 42	abjurations: (1514) renunciation of an oath, foreswearing; used especially of heresies
11. 53-54	*Oculi & aures aliorum te speculantur & custodiunt*: The eyes and ears of others observe you and keep watch on you.

1. 60 A negotio perambulante in tenebris: coming from business that wanders in darkness (business is unclear, unsafe, possibly sinful)

Commentary

The date of this letter, 14 March 1607/8, appears to be correct. Sir Toby Mathew, the son of the Archbishop of York, converted to Catholicism in Florence in 1606 and returned to England in 1607, where he openly admitted his conversion. The Archbishop of Canterbury tried unsuccessfully to reconvert Mathew. Mathew was consequently imprisoned in the Fleet for six months and eventually forced to leave England in April 1608.

The dates of the letters (when they are included) are usually correct; the names of the correspondents are less likely to be so. This letter is a case in point. The letter is headed "To the best Knight Sir Henry Wotton," but it cannot have been written to Wotton. Wotton was Ambassador to Venice between 1604 and 1610; this letter was obviously written to someone in England. Wotton was not closely associated with any Countess; Donne opens this letter with a reference to "your good Countess." During this period of his life, Donne was closely associated with the Countess of Bedford and the reference must be to her. The letter, then, must have been written to Sir Henry Goodyer. The reference to Sir Toby Mathew supports this view. Matthews was a friend of Donne's and Goodyer's but apparently closer to Goodyer. Goodyer agreed to take over some of Mathew's property to prevent its being confiscated because of Mathew's recusancy. Donne obviously thinks Goodyer needs to conclude his business with Mathew before Matthew's departure. This letter is also characteristic of other Donne letters to Goodyer in that Donne discusses Goodyer's tendency to neglect his business.

45

To Sir T.R. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Have bespoke you a New-years-gift, that
is, a good New year, for I have offered
your name with my soul heartily to God in
my mornings best Sacrifice: If for custome
you will doe a particular office in recom-
pense, deliver this Letter to your Lady,
now, or when the rage of the Mask is past.
If you make any haste into the Country, I
pray let me know it. I would kisse your
hands before you goe, which I doe now,
and continue
Micham, the last of 1607. Your affectionate servant
as I remember. and lover J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 70 (204)

Also in Gosse (I: 182)

Transcription Notes

To Sir T.R.: The heading falsely implies that this letter was written to Sir Thomas Roe.

Commentary

The letter was written on March 24, 1608: Lady Day (March 25) was considered to be New Year's Day under the old calendar, and Donne dates this letter "the last of 1607." It was not written to Sir Thomas Roe, but to Sir Henry Goodyer, to whom Donne sent all of his letters and poems written for the Countess of Bedford. That the enclosure was meant for the Countess of Bedford is almost certain. She was a leading participant in the masques at court, participating in five Court Masques (Milgate 266).

Gosse (I: 182) correctly dates this letter March 24, 1608, but incorrectly accepts the title in the Letters as referring to Sir Thomas Roe. He identifies the "Mask" which Donne refers to as Ben Jonson's The Hue and Cry after Cupid, "prepared at Court for Lord Haddington's marriage with Lady Elizabeth Radcliffe on Shrove Tuesday." Bald (I think incorrectly) dates the letter 31 December 1607 without giving a reason for his date. He does add, however, that the enclosure referred to was possibly Donne's verse letter "To the Countesse of Bedford At New-years Tide" (173). Milgate (266) suggests that this verse letter was possibly sent to the Countess on

> New Year's Day (i.e., Lady Day, 25 March) 1610. . . . This one might not have been the only New Year letter in verse that Donne sent to the Countess. It is not clear whether it is this one, another, or a letter in prose, to which Donne refers in a note to Goodyer on "the last of 1607."

Milgate is reluctant to link this covering letter with the New Year's verse letter to the Countess of Bedford because he places the verse letter later in the series (fifth of eight) of Donne's verse letters to her. The verse letter which Milgate admits contains "implied gentle criticism of her indulgence in Court frivolities" fits too well with Donne's reference in the covering letter to "when the rage of the Mask is past" to make it very likely that Donne referred to an unknown prose or verse letter.

46

[To the Countess of Bedford]

Madam. I am intangled in a double affliction by being accused not only to haue heard (w^{ch} is a forfeyture of my service & place in y^r favor) but to haue spoken dishonorably of y^o. I find not myself to be so spungy either to take in or powre out so easyly. and I am sure y^o would not thinke me worthy to bee pardoned for any fault if I should confessingly aske a pardon for this. it would moue me less y^t y^e envious world should speake this, because envy (w^{ch} cannot be driuen from accompanying vertue) is foule spoken; & therfore naturally slaunderous. but I must wonder wth griefe y^t my lo: Latmer whose discretion & allowaunce of my loue to him I should much prise one by no meanes (knowne to me) interested in y^r honor or compasionate in y^r dishonor otherwise then generall nobility borne in him instructeth him should load M^r Davies wth y^e op^{r}ssion of having dishonored y^o & deriue it from him to me. I heere y^r father hath taken it for good fuell of anger against m^r davis & [perchaunce] me to. I do easylyer forgiue his anger then his credulity: for it is pitty he should haue beene any instrument in y^e building of so fayre a pallace as y^o are and so furnishing it as his care hath done if hee would not be angry wth any defect. but (methinks) it cannot become y^t discretion w^{ch} I think y^o inherit from him to vnbridle his suspicion so much to y^e p^{e}iudice of my vnderstanding & honesty. though my merites be not such as y^t they ever do works of supperrogation, yet I durst vpon my conscience acquit him of ever conceaving vnworthyly of you. but y^e reverence & respect I haue alwayes loued you commaunds me to employ all my force in keeping myself in y^r good thoughts & to leaue y^o well assured, not y^t I ever spake but y^t I never heard ill word from any man w^{ch} might be wrested to y^e impeachment of y^r honor w^{ch} here I sweare to y^o by my loue & by y^t fayre learned hand w^{ch} I humbly kisse. & take leaue.

Source: Burley MS., f. 296

Commentary

This letter, as Simpson (321) notes, concerns people who moved in the same circles as Donne:

> The 'Mr. Davies' here mentioned is probably the poet, John Davies of Hereford. He is mentioned by Anthony a Wood as one of a group (including Ben Jonson, Drayton, Selden, William Browne, and Wither) who knew and admired Christopher Brooke, Donne's intimate friend. He moved in the same literary circles as Donne, for he dedicated The Holy Roode in 1609 to the

> Countess of Derby and her three daughters, and in 1612 he published The Muses Sacrifice, dedicated to Lucy, Countess of Bedford, Mary Countess-dowager of Pembroke, and Elizabeth Lady Carey. In the latter he referred to Donne's lately published elegy on Elizabeth Drury, and made the usual pun on his name.

John Davies was also a friend of Arthur Mainwarring, who was not only one of Sir Thomas Egerton's ushers, but was also connected by marriage to Lady Egerton (Bald, Life 96-97). Hence, Davies may have also encountered Donne at Egerton's.

My Lord Latimer is Edmund Neville. Neville had been imprisoned in the Tower from 1585 to 1595. The D.N.B. (247) suggests that he went abroad soon after his release. He was suspected of complicity in the plot of William Parry to assassinate Elizabeth. Neville informed on Parry early in February 1585. Parry was tried and executed in that year. Neville was held in the Tower from 1585 to 1595 (D.N.B. 247). Neville, on his father's side, was a great-grandson of John Neville, third Baron Latymer, and so distantly related to Charles Neville, Earl of Westmorland, one of the leaders of the Northern Rebellion of 1569 and who subsequently went into exile on the Continent. Neville claimed the Barony of Latymer in 1584, and in 1601 laid claim to the Earldom of Westmorland. His claims were never heard, although he may have been the next heir. James granted his widow a pension, which implies some strength to this claim. Neville was related to other Catholic conspirators against Elizabeth: he was a cousin-in-law of John Somerville and he was distantly related to Francis Throckmorton through the Ardens. The latter was executed in 1584 for planning to kill Elizabeth (Eric St. John Brooks 359, 236-40). Neville may have known Donne through the Throckmortons. Donne's brother-in-law was Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, a cousin of Francis Throckmorton. Nicholas Throckmorton married Sir George More's oldest daughter, Mary; his sister was the wife of Sir Walter Raleigh. Nicholas Throckmorton took the name of Carey in 1607 when he inherited the estate of Bedington in Surrey from his maternal uncle.

Despite the possible connections between the lady addressed in this letter and members of Egerton's circle, the letter itself suggests that it was written to the Countess of Bedford. In it Donne discusses how others' envy accompanies a person's virtue, he describes the lady as a "fayre pallace," and he discusses the importance of discretion. He also closes the letter with a phrase that he uses in other letters to the Countess of Bedford referring to kissing her "fayre learned hand" (Letters, No. 68). The difficulty of achieving virtue in an envious and slanderous world and the importance of discretion form the main topics of Donne's verse letters to the Countess of Bedford. They may, in fact, have been suggested to Donne by the incident connected with this letter.

This letter contains obvious parallels with the first two verse letters to the Countess of Bedford, "Reason is our Soules left hand" and "Madame, You have refin'd mee." Both are tentatively dated 1608 by Milgate. In Donne's first verse letter to the Countess of Bedford, he spends three stanzas discussing the effect of slander on her reputation:

> That you are good: not one Heretique
>   Denies it: if he did, yet you are so;
> For; rockes, which high top'd and deep rooted sticke,
>   Waves wash, not undermine, nor overthrow.
>
> In every thing there naturally growes
>   A Balsamum to keepe it fresh, and now,
> If 'twere not injur'd by extrinsique blowes;
>   Your birth and beauty are this Balme in you.

> But you of learning and religion,
>   And vertue, and such ingredients, have made
> A methridate, whose operation
>   Keepes off, or cures what can be done or said.
>   (Milgate 91, ll. 17-28)

In Donne's second verse letter to the Countess of Bedford he spends three stanzas discussing the Countess of Bedford as a temple of "vertue":

> So in this pilgrimage I would behold
>   You as you' are vertues temple, not as shee,
> What walls of tender christall her enfold,
>   What eyes, hands, bosome, her pure Altars bee;
>   And after this survay, oppose to all
>   Bablers of Chappels, you th' Escuriall.
>   (Milgate 93, ll. 43-48)

The prose letter, of course, suggests that the lady's father should have more confidence that her discretion will protect her from such slander, and compares her to a "fayre" palace, "built" and "furnished" by her father.

These parallels suggest that the prose letter was written to the Countess of Bedford about 1608.

47

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Hope you are now welcome to London, and well, and well comforted in your fathers health and love, and well contented that we aske you how you doe, and tell you how we are, which yet I cannot of my selfe; If I knew that I were ill, I were well; For we consist of three parts, a Soule, and Body, and Mind: which I call those thoughts and affections and passions, which neither Soule nor Body hath alone, but have beene begotten by their communication, as Musique results out of our breath and a Cornet. And of all these the diseases are cures, if they be knowne. Of our Soules sicknesses, which are sinnes, the knowledge is, to acknowledge, and that is her physick, in which wee are not dieted by drams and scruples, for we cannot take

too much. Of our bodies infirmities, though our knowledge be partly ab extrinseco, from the opinion of the Physitian, and that the subject and matter be flexible, and various; Yet their rules are certaine, and if the matter be rightly applyed to the rule, our knowledge thereof is also certaine. But of the diseases of the minde, there is no Cryterium, no Canon, no rule; for, our owne tast and apprehension & interpretation should be the judge, and that is the disease it selfe. Therefore sometimes when I finde my selfe transported with jollity, and love of company, I hang leads at my heeles, and reduce to my thoughts my fortunes, my yeares, the duties of a man, of a friend, of a husband, of a father, and all the incumbencies of a family. When sadnesse dejects me, either I countermine it with another sadnesse, or I kindle squibs about mee againe, and flie into sportfulnesse and company. And I finde ever after all, that I am like an Exorcist, which had long laboured about one, which at last appeares to have the Mother, that I still mistake my disease. And I still vexe my selfe with this, because if I know it not, no body can know it. And I comfort my selfe because I see dispassioned men are subject to the like ignorances. For divers mindes out of the same thing often draw contrary conclusions, as Augustine thought devout Anthony to bee therfore full of the holy Ghost, because, not being able to read, he could say the whole Bible, and interpret it. And Thyraeus the Jesuite for the same reason doth thinke all the Anabaptists to be possessed. And as often out of contrary things men draw one conclusion. As, To the Romane Church, Magnificence and Splendor hath ever beene an argument of Gods favour, and Poverty and Affliction, to the Greeke. Out of this variety of mindes it proceeds, that though all our Soules would goe to one end, Heaven, and all our bodies must goe to one end, the Earth: Yet our third part, the minde, which is our naturall Guide here, chuses to every man a severall way. Scarce any man likes what another doth, nor, advisedly, that which himselfe. But, Sir, I am beyond my purpose; I meant to write a letter, and I am fallen into a discourse, and I doe not only take you from some businesse, but I make you a new businesse by drawing you into these meditations. In which yet let my opennes be an argument of such love as I would fain expresse in some worthier fashion.

Source: Poems 1633 (370-72)

Collation

Title *To Sir H.G.* 1633 pp. 370-72
1635, 39 pp. 298-300
1649, 50, 54 pp. 287-89

To Sir H.G. 1669 pp. 283-85
Letters 1651, 54 pp. 70-73
1719 pp. 152-53 [sic] 252-53

l. 1 wel come] well come 1635-1719 welcome *Letters*
London] *London* 1649-54, 1719 *Letters* and] & 1649-54

l. 2 well] wel 1649-54 fathers] Fathers *Letters* father's 1719
and] & 1635-54

l. 3 contented] co*n*tented 1635 aske] ask 1635-1719 *Letters*
doe,] do 1635 do, 1649-1719 and] & 1649-54

l. 4 selfe;] self; 1649-54 *Letters* self. 1719

l. 5 well;] well: 1719 For] for *Letters*

l. 6 Soule] Soul 1649-1719 *Letters*
and Body] and body 1635 *Letters* a Body 1719
Mind:] Minde: 1635-69 *Letters* Mind; 1719

l. 7 call] cal 1649-54 thoughts] thoughts, 1719 and] & 1635-54
affections] affections, 1635-1719

l. 8 Soule] Soul 1649-1719 soul *Letters*
Body] body 1649-69 *Letters* beene] been 1669 1719 *Letters*

l. 9 Musique] Musick 1635-1719

l. 11 knowne] known 1649-1719 *Letters* Soules] Souls 1649-69
Soul's 1719 souls *Letters*

l. 12 sinnes] sins 1719 is,] is 1649-1719

l. 13 acknowledge,] acknowledg 1669 physick,] physick; 1719
Physique *Letters* wee] we 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 15 much.] much: 1719 bodies] body's 1719

l. 16 bee] be 1635

l. 17 Physitian] Physician 1719

l. 18 various; Yet] various; yet 1635 *Letters*
various, yet 1639-1719 certaine,] certain; 1649-1719
certain, *Letters* and] and, 1719

l. 19 applyed] applied 1649-54

l. 20 knowledge] knowledg 1669 certaine.] certain. 1649-69 *Letters*
certain: 1719

l. 21 minde,] mind 1719 Cryterium] Criterium 1639-1719
Criterium *Letters* rule;] rule: 1719

l. 22 for,] for 1639-1719 owne] own 1635-1719
tast] taste 1650-54 1719 *Letters*
apprehension] apprehension, 1719 &] and 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 23 judge,] judge; 1719 Judge, *Letters*
selfe] self 1669 1719 *Letters*

l. 24 sometimes] sometimes, 1719 finde] find 1719
selfe] self 1669, 1719 *Letters*

l. 25 jollity] jollitie 1635, 39 and] & 1635-54
leads] Leads *Letters*

l. 26 heeles,] heels, 1649-1719 heels; *Letters*

l. 27 yeares] years 1649-1719 *Letters* the] he *Letters*

l. 28 family.] family: 1719 *Letters*

l. 29 When] when *Letters* sadnesse] sadness 1669 1719

l. 30 sadnesse] sadness 1669 1719 squibs] squibbs 1635-54
mee] me 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 31 againe] again 1649-1719 *Letters* flie] fly 1669 1719
sportfulnesse] sportfulness 1669 1719
company. And] company: and *Letters*

l. 32 finde] find 1719 Exorcist] exorcist *Letters*

l. 33 appeares] appears 1649-1719 *Letters*

l. 35 still] stil 1635 vexe] vex 1639-1719 *Letters*
selfe] self 1669 1719 *Letters* this,] this 1649-69
because] because, 1719

l. 36 it.] it: 1719 selfe] self 1669 self, *Letters* 1719

l. 38 mindes] minds 1719

l. 39 conclusions,] conclusions; 1719
Augustine] *Augustine* *Letters* 1719

l. 40 Anthony] *Anthony* *Letters* 1719 bee] be 1639-1719 *Letters*
therfore] therefore 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 41 because,] because *Letters* read] reade 1635-54

l. 42 it. And] it; and *Letters* it: And 1719
Thyraeus] *Thyreus* *Letters* *Thyraeus* 1719
Jesuite] Iesuite 1635, 39 *Jesuit* *Letters*

l. 43 thinke] think 1649-54 Anabaptists] *Anabaptists* 1719
bee] be 1635

l. 45 conclusion.] conclusion; 1719 As,] As *Letters* 1719
To] to *Letters* 1719 Romane] Roman 1649-69
Roman *Letters* 1719 Church,] Church 1719

l. 46 Magnificence] magnificence *Letters* Splendor] splendor *Letters*
beene] been 1649-1719

l. 47 Gods] God's 1719 favour,] favour: 1635-1719
Poverty] poverty *Letters* and] & *Letters*
Affliction,] affliction, 1639-69 *Letters* Affliction 1719

l. 48 Greeke] Greek 1649-69 *Greek* *Letters* 1719
variety] varietie 1639 mindes] minds 1719

l. 49 that] that, 1719 Soules] Souls 1669 1719 *Letters*
goe] go 1669 1719

l. 50 Heaven,] Heaven; 1635-54 heaven; 1669 1719
goe] go 1669

l. 51 Earth: Yet] earth; Yet 1639 earth; yet 1649-1719
earth: yet *Letters* minde] mind 1719

l. 52 naturall] natural 1669 1719 Guide] guide *Letters*
chuses] chooses *Letters* 1719 severall] several 1669 1719

l. 53 way. Scarce] way: scarce *Letters* nor,] nor 1649-1719 *Letters*

l. 54 advisedly,] advisedly 1719
himselfe] himself 1649-1719 *Letters*

l. 55 meant] mean 1669 *Letters* letter] Letter *Letters*
fallen] falne 1635-69 fall'n 1719

l. 56 and I doe] and do 1719 and I do *Letters*
only] onely 1635-54

l. 57 businesse] business 1669 1719 businesse] business 1669
business, 1719

l. 58 which yet let] which let *Letters*

l. 59 opennes] opennesse 1635-54 _Letters_ openness 1669 1719
love] love, 1719 fain] faine 1635-54
expresse] express 1669 1719

Textual Notes

l. 42 Thyraeus (1633, 1719): ae is written as a ligature.

Notes

l. 16 _ab extrinseco_: from without ourselves, outside ourselves

Commentary

Gosse (I: 183) conjectures that this letter was written in the spring of 1608 to Sir Henry Goodyer. He states, however, that there is a difficulty with this attribution because the letter speaks of the health of the recipient's father. Neither Goodyer's father, Sir William Goodyer (who died in 1578) nor Sir Henry Goodyer (Goodyer's uncle and his wife's father) was living in 1608. Gosse's dating of the letter is based on its revelation of Donne's "mercurial temperament" which Gosse thought foreshadowed Donne's depression in 1608. Bald (_Life_ 230) also quotes the letter as an example of Donne's despondency during his Mitcham years without attempting a more specific date. The passage Bald quotes corresponds to Donne's situation at Mitcham because it mentions his poor fortunes and inability to fulfill his duty to his family and to society.

Although this letter is neither signed nor dated, Bald appears to be correct in his dating.

48

To Sir H. G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

BEcause I am in a place and season where I see every thing bud forth, I must do so too, and vent some of my meditations to you; the rather because all other buds being yet without taste or vertue, my letters may be like them. The pleasantnes of the season displeases mee. Every thing refreshes, and I wither, and I grow older and not better. My strength diminishes, and my load growes, and being to passe more and more stormes, I finde that I have not only cast out all my ballast which nature and time gives, reason & discretion, & so am as empty & light as vanity can make me, but I have over-fraught my selfe with vice, and so am riddingly subject to two contrary wrackes, sinking and over-setting, and under the iniquity of such a disease as enforces the patient when hee is almost starv'd, not onely to fast, but to purge; for I have much to take in, and much to cast out. Sometimes I thinke it easier to discharge my selfe of vice then of vanity, as one may sooner carry the fire out of a roome then the smoke: And then I see it was a new vanity to thinke so. And when I thinke sometimes, that vanity, because it is thinne and airy, may be expelled with vertue or businesse, or substantiall vice; I finde that I give entrance thereby to new vices. Certainly as the earth & water, one sad, the other fluid, make but one body: so to vice, and vanity, there is but one Centrum morbi. And that which later Physitians say of our bodies, is fitter for our mindes; for that which they call destruction, which is a corruption and want of those fundamentall parts whereof we consist, is vice: And that Collectio Stercorum, which is but the Excrement of that corruption, is our vanity and indiscretion. Both these have but one root in mee, and must bee pulled out at once, or never. But I am so far from digging to it, that I know not where it is. For it is not in mine eyes only, but in every sense, nor in my concupiscence only, but in every power and affection. Sir, I was willing to let you see how impotent a man you love, not to dishearten you from doing so still (for my vices are not infectious, nor wandring, They came not yesterday, nor meane to goe away to day: They Inne not, but dwell in mee, and see themselves so welcome, and finde in mee so good bad company of one another, that they will not change, especially to one not apprehensive, nor easily accessible) but I doe it, that your counsell might cure mee, and if you deny that, your example shall, for I will as much strive to be like you as I will wish you to continue good.

Source: *Poems*, 1633 (368-69)

Collation

Title *To S^r* H.G. 1633 pp. 368-69

To Sir H.G. 1635, 39 pp. 297-98
1649, 50, 54 pp. 286-87

To Sir H.G. 1669 pp. 282-83
Letters 1651, 54 pp. 78-80

To Sir H.G. 1719 pp. 250-152 (sic) 252

SIR] *SIR* *Letters* 1719

l. 1 and] & 1635 season] season, 1719

l. 2 forth,] forth 1649-54 do] doe 1635, 39 too] two 1669
and] & 1635-54

l. 3 meditations] meditations 1635 1649-54 you;] you, 1639-69
rather] rather, 1719 all] al 1649-54

l. 4 vertue] virtue *Letters* 1719 letters] Letters *Letters*

l. 5 pleasantnes] pleasantness 1669 1719 pleasantnesse *Letters*
mee] me 1719

l. 6 mee] me 1635-1719 *Letters* refreshes,] refreshes; 1635-1719

l. 7 older] older, 1635-1719 better. My] better, my *Letters*

l. 8 growes,] grows, 1635-69 grows; 1719 and] & 1649-54
passe] pass 1669 1719 and] & 1639

l. 9 stormes] storms 1635-1719 finde] find 1635-1719

l. 10 ballast,] ballast, 1635-1719 reason] Reason *Letters*
&] and 1669 1719 *Letters* discretion] discretion 1649-54

l. 11 &] and 1669 1719 *Letters* empty] emptie 1635
&] and 1650 1719 *Letters* vanity] Vanity *Letters*
mee,] me, 1669 me; 1719 *Letters*

l. 12 over-fraught] over fraught *Letters*
selfe] self 1649-1719 *Letters* vice] Vice *Letters*
and] & 1635-54

l. 13 wrackes] wracks 1669 1719 sinking] Sinking *Letters*

l. 14 over-setting] Over-setting *Letters*
iniquity] iniquitie 1635, 39 disease] disease, 1719

l. 15 enforces] inforces *Letters* patient] patient, 1719
hee] he 1635-1719 *Letters* starv'd] starved *Letters*

l. 16 onely] only 1635-54 1719 *Letters*
purge; for] purge. For *Letters*

l. 17 out. Sometimes] out; sometimes *Letters*
thinke] think 1649-54 1719

l. 18 selfe] self 1649-1719 *Letters* then] than 1635, 39 1719

l. 19 roome] roome, 1635, 39 room, 1649-69 room *Letters* 1719
then] than 1635, 39 1719 smoke] smoak 1635-1719
smoake *Letters*

l. 20 And] and *Letters* vanity] vanitie 1639
thinke] think 1649-1719 *Letters*

l. 21 thinke] think 1649-1719 *Letters*
sometimes,] sometimes 1635-1719 *Letters*
vanity] vanitie 1635, 39

l. 22 thinne] thin 1649-1719 airy] ayrie 1635-54 ayery 1669
airie *Letters*

l. 23 businesse] business 1649-1719
substantiall] substantial 1669 1719 vice;] vice, 1719
finde] find 1649-1719 entrance] entrance 1635

l. 24 thereby] therby 1639, 49-54 vices.] vices; 1649-69
&] and *Letters* 1719

l. 25 body:] body, 1649-1719 *Letters* to vice] to one vice 1719
to aire *Letters*

l. 26 vanity,] vanitie, 1635, 39 vanity 1719 Vanity *Letters*
Centrum morbi] *Centrum morbi* 1635 1649-54

l. 27 later] latter 1649-1719 Physitians] Phisitians 1635, 39
Physicians *Letters* 1719

l. 28 mindes] minds 1719 that] that, 1719
destruction, which] destruction, (which 1635-1719
Destruction, which *Letters*

l. 29 fundamentall] fundamental 1669 1719 parts] parts, 1719

l. 30 consist,] consist) 1635-1719 vice] Vice *Letters*
And] and *Letters*

l. 31 *Stercorum*, which] *Stercorum* (which 1635, 39 1649-54
Stercorum (which 1669 *stercorum*, which *Letters*
Stercorum (which 1719 Excrement] excrement 1635-1719 *Letters*
corruption,] corruption) 1635-1719

l. 32 vanity] vanitie 1635, 39 Vanity *Letters*
indiscretion. Both] indiscretion: both *Letters*

l. 33 root] roote 1635, 39 mee] me 1635-1719 *Letters*
bee] be 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 34 never.] never *Letters* far] farre 1635-69 *Letters*

l. 35 is. For] is, for *Letters* only] onely 1635-69

l. 36 sense,] sense; 1719 nor] not 1639-1719
only] onely 1635-69

l. 37 affection.] affection: 1669 Sir,] Sir 1649-54
let] lett 1635

l. 40 wandring, They] wandring, they 1635-69 *Letters*
wandring; they 1719

l. 41 meane] mean 1649-1719 *Letters* goe] go *Letters* 1719
They] they *Letters* Inne] Inn 1719

l. 42 mee] me 1635-1719 *Letters* welcome] wellcome 1669 1719

l. 43 finde in mee so] find so 1719 finde in me so 1635 *Letters*

l. 45 doe] do *Letters* 1719 it,] it 1635-69
counsell] counsel 1669 1719

l. 46 mee] me 1649-1719 *Letters*

l. 47 shall,] shall: 1719 shal *Letters* you] you, 1639-1719
I will wish] I wish 1719

Textual Notes

To Sir H.G.: To Sir Henry Goodyer

Commentary

This is another of Donne's letters to Goodyer about the soul (see letters of 9 October 1607 and "late 1607"), but Donne's concern here is with his own soul, not Goodyer's. Gosse (I: 185), Merrill (285) and Bald (*Life* 175-76) all date this letter in the spring of 1608. Donne's discussion of virtue and his depression suggest the year; the time of year is obvious from Donne's discussion of the effect spring is having on him. Bald and Grierson (II: 25) both link this letter with Donne's poem written for the Countess of Bedford, "Twicknam Garden." The poem, like Donne's letter, contrasts the misery of the speaker with the life and beauty of spring.

49

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Cannot yet serve you with those books of which your Letter spake. In recompense I will tell you a story, which if I had had leasure to have told it you when it was fresh, which was upon Thursday last, might have had some grace for the rareness, and would have tried your love to me, how farre you would adventure to beleeve an improbable thing for my sake who relates it. That day in the morning, there was some end made, by the E. of *Salisbury* and others, who were Arbitrators in some differences between *Herford* and *Mountegle*, *Herford* was ill satisfied in it, and declared himself so farre as to say, he expected better usage in respect not only of his cause but of his expence and service in his Ambassage: to which *Salisbury* replied, that considered how things stood between his Majesty and *Herford* house at the Kings enterance, the King had done him especiall favour in that employment of honour and confidence, by declaring in so publique and great an act and testimony, that he had no ill affections toward him. *Herford* answered, that he was then and ever an honest man to the King: and *Salisbury* said, he denied not that, but yet solemnly repeated his first words again. So that *Herford* seemed not to make answer, but pursuing his own word, said, that whosoever denied him to have been an honest man to the King, lyed. *Salisbury* asked him if he directed that upon him, *Herford* said, upon any who denied this. The earnestnes of both was such, as *Salisbury* accepted it to himself, and made protestation before the LL. present, that he would do nothing else, till he had honorably put off that lye. Within an hour after, *Salisbury* sent him a direct challenge, by his servant M^{r} *Knightley*; *Herford* required only an hours leisure of consideration (it is said, it was onely to inform himself of the especiall danger, in dealing so with a Counsellor) but he returned his acceptation: And all circumstances were so clearly handled between them, that S^{t} *James* was agreed for the place, and they were both come from their severall lodgings, and upon the way to have met, when they were interrupted by such as from the King were sent to have care of it. So these two have escaped this great danger; but (by my troth) I fear earnestly that Mistresse *Bolstrod* will not escape that sicknesse in which she labours at this time. I sent this morning to aske of her passage of this night; and the return is, that she is as I left her yesternight, and then by the strength of her understanding, and voyce, (proportionally to her fashion, which was ever remisse) by the eavennesse and life of her pulse, and by her temper, I could allow her long life, and impute all her sicknesse to her minde. But the History of her sicknesse, makes me justly fear, that she will scarce last so long, as that you when you receive this letter, may do her any good office, in praying for her; for she hath not for many days received so much as a preserved Barbery, but it returnes, and all accompanied with a Fever, the mother, and an extream ill spleen. Whilest I write this Tuesday morning, from *Bartlet* house one brings me a pacquet to your Master: he is gone; and that Lady and all the company is from

town. I thought I might be pardoned, if
I thought my self your man for that service
to open it, which I did, and for the Letters
I will deliver them. What else you bid
Foster do in his Letter, bid him do it there,
for (so God help me) I know not what it
is. I must end now, else the carrier will be
gone. God be with you.

Yours intirely.

*You know me without a name, and I know
not how this Letter goes*.

Source: *Letters* No. 77 (213-17)

Also in Gosse (I: 230-32)

Notes

l. 13 Herford: Hertford

Mountegle: Mounteagle

l. 47 S^{t}. James: St. James Park - situated by Whitehall Palace and a common place for duels

l. 54 Bolstrod: Bulstrode

l. 73 *Bartlet* house: the residence of Sir Thomas Bartlett, where Goodyer lodged

Commentary

This letter can be dated late July 1608 because Donne refers to the imminent death of Cecilia Bulstrode, a close friend of the Countess of Bedford and one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. Cecilia Bulstrode died on 4 August 1608. George Garrard, a close friend of Donne's, gathered memorial verses for Cecilia Bulstrode from Ben Jonson (who had earlier quarreled with her) and from Donne. Donne's "Elegie on Mistress Bulstrode," beginning "Death I recant," has been criticized as an unfeeling poem. It has been linked with two other poems, "Death," beginning "Language thou art too narrow," and "Death be not proud." Grierson believed that the former was sent by Donne to the Countess of Bedford with the verse letter "You that are shee and you." He therefore suggests that "Language thou art too narrow" was written for Lady Markham, another close friend of the Countess of Bedford's who died four months earlier on 4 May 1609, because Lady Markham was a widow and the verse letter contains an allusion to Judith, a widow described in the Apocrypha. The other poem, "Death be not proud," Grierson attributes to the Countess of Bedford herself on the death of Cecilia Bulstrode. For a more complete discussion of the relationship of these poems, see Bald (Life 177-79) and Grierson (II: cxliii, 212-14).

The quarrels between Herford and Mountegle and then Herford and Salisbury that Donne describes are not typical subjects of his letters. For more than one reason, it was dangerous for anyone to commit to paper news that might be able to be used against him or her in the future. Donne, here, does not sign the letter, even though he is obviously attempting to be as neutral as possible in his description of the events of the quarrel. Goodyer would be interested in the conflict between Herford and Salisbury because Lord Salisbury (Sir Robert Cecil) was the secretary of state and a distant family connection of Goodyer's and Goodyer had accompanied the Earl of Herford's (Edward Seymour, first Earl of Herford) embassy in 1605 to ratify the peace treaty with Spain (Bald, Life 164).

Montegle (Lord Mounteagle, William Parker) was the fourth Lord Mounteagle. He was involved in Essex's revolt in 1601. He was a Catholic who sought Spanish aid for a Catholic revolt in England. In

March 1604, however, he wrote to King James that he had converted to Protestantism. He prospered at court but maintained his Catholic connections. It was through Mounteagle that the Gunpowder Plot was discovered. He apparently received a letter warning him away from Parliament and turned over the letter to Lord Salisbury (Akrigg 72).

50

To Mr George Garet [Garrard].

SIR,

I Have not received that Letter, which by this, I perceive you sent to *London*; if there were any thing in that, by which I might gave taken occasion to have done you service before this time, I have a double reason of grief for the want of it. I came from thence upon *Thursday*, where I left Sir *Tho. Roe* so indulgent to his sorrow, as it had been an injury to have interrupted it with my unusefull company. I have done nothing of that kinde as your Letter intimates, in the memory of that good Gentlewoman; if I had, I should not finde any better use of it, then to put it into your hands. You teach me what I owe her memory; and if I pay that debt so, you have a part and interest in it, by doing me the honour of remembring it: and therefore it must come quickly to you. I hope not for your return from Court, till I come thither; which if I can be master of my self, or servant to my self, which I think is all one, I hope to do some ten daies hence, making it my way to the *Bathe*. If you find any there that have not forgot my name, continue me in their favour, and hold in your self a firm assurance that I am

Your affectionate servant J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 14 (38-39)

Also in Gosse (I: 232-233)

Commentary

This letter follows Letter No. 50, because Donne's reference to having done "nothing of that kinde as your Letter intimates, in the memory of that good Gentlewoman" must refer to his elegy on Mistress Bulstrode. The good Gentlewoman must be Cecilia Bulstrode, because a letter of Ben Jonson's indicates that George Garrard was collecting verses in her memory (Grierson II: 213). This letter of Donne's suggests that at the time of her death, Sir Thomas Roe was her lover.

51

To Sir I. H. [Sir John Harrington]

SIR,

I Would not omit this, not Commodity, but Advantage of writing to you. This emptinesse in London, dignifies any Letter from hence, as in the seasons, earlinesse and latenesse, makes the sowrenesse, and after the sweetnesse of fruits acceptable and gracious. We often excuse and advance mean Authors, by the age in which they lived, so will your love do this Letter; and you will tell your self, that if he which writ it knew wherein he might expresse his affection, or any thing, which might have made his Letter welcommer, he would have done it. As it is, you may accept it so, as we do many China manufactures, of which when we know no use, yet we satisfie our curiosity in considering them, because we knew not how, nor of what matter they were made. Near great woods and quarries it is no wonder to see faire houses, but in Holland which wants both, it is. So were it for me who am as farre removed from Court, and knowledge of forein passages, as this City is now from the face and furniture of a City, to build up a long Letter and to write of my self, were but to inclose a poor handfull of straw for a token in a Letter: yet I will tell you, that I am at London

> onely to provide for Monday, when I shall use that favour which my Lady Bedford hath afforded me, of giving her name to my daughter; which I mention to you, as well to shew that I covet any occasion of a gratefull speaking of her favours, as that, because I have thought the day is likely to bring you to London, I might tell you, that my poor house is in your way and you shall there finde such company, as (I think) you will not be loth to accompany to London.
>
> 6 Aug. 1608. Your very true friend,
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters 1651 No. 40 (118-19)

Also in Gosse (I: 188)

Commentary

Gosse (I: 188) may be correct in identifying Donne's correspondent here as Sir John Harrington, the translator. Bennett ("Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons*" 121) believes that the letter was addressed to Goodyer, suggesting that Goodyer was not at Polesworth, because Donne states that his house is on his correspondent's way to London, while Polesworth was south and Mitcham north of London. For this reason Bald (*Life* 158, n. 1) remains unconvinced that the letter was written to Goodyer and suggests that the letter may very well have been written to Sir John Harrington, the Countess of Bedford's brother. Donne mentions in another letter (see Letter No. 31) that he has on at least one occasion written to Sir John Harrington. In fact, it would be unthinkable for Donne to avoid an opportunity to write to one of the closest friends of Prince Henry and the likely favorite of the next reign. Not only was writing to Harrington an opportunity for Donne, but not to write would probably have been construed as a lack of respect.

52

To your self [Sir Henry Goodyer].

SIR,
I Send you here a Translation; but it is
not onely to beleeve me, it is a great invention
to have understood any piece of
this Book, whether the gravity of the matter,
or the Poeticall form, give it his inclination,
and *principium motus*; you are his
center, or his spheare, and to you as to his
proper place he addresses himself. Besides
that all my things, not onely by obligation,
but by custome, know that that is the way
they should goe. I spake of this to my
L. of *Bedford*, thinking then I had had a copy
which I made long since, at Sea, but because
I finde it not, I have done that again:
when you finde it not unseasonable, let her
see it; and if you can think it fit, that a thing
that hath either wearied, or distasted you,
should receive so much favour, put it
amongst her papers: when you have a
new stomach to it, I will provide you
quickly a new Copy.
At my Micham *Your very true friend and servant*
Hospitall, Aug. 10. *and lover* J. Donne.

Source: *Letters*, 1651, No. 73 (207-08)

Also in Gosse (I: 189)

Notes

l. 6 *principium motus*: first motion (driving principle)

Commentary

Donne's reference to his habit of corresponding with the Countess of Bedford through the person he addresses in this letter makes it certain that this letter was addressed to Goodyer. The translation he refers to has not been identified. Donne was particularly friendly with the Countess of Bedford in 1608. That fact, combined with his reference to writing from "my Micham hospitall" on August 10, connects this letter with other letters believed written in the fall of 1608 in which Donne discusses both his illness and his association with the Countess of Bedford.

The translation Donne refers to must have been made during either the "Cadiz" expedition of 1596 or the "Islands" expedition of 1597.

53

To Sir H. G. [Henry Goodyer]

> SIR,
>
> THis letter hath more merit, then one of more diligence, for I wrote it in my bed, and with much pain. I have occasion to sit late some nights in my study, (which your books make a prety library) and now I finde that that room hath a wholesome emblematique use: for having under it a vault, I make that promise me, that I shall die reading, since my book and a grave are so near. But it hath another unwholesomenesse, that by raw vapors rising from thence, (for I can impute it to nothing else) I have contracted a sicknesse which I cannot name nor describe. For it hath so much of a continuall Cramp, that it wrests the sinews, so much of a Tetane, that it withdraws and puls the mouth, and so much of the Gout, (which they whose counsell I use, say it is) that it is not like to be cured, though I am too hasty in three days to pronounce it. If it be the Gout, I am miserable; for that affects dangerous parts, as my neck and brest, and (I think fearfully) my stomach, but it will not kill me yet; I shall be in this world, like a porter in a great house, ever nearest the door, but seldomest abroad: I shall have many things to make me weary, and yet not get leave to be gone. If I go, I will provide by my best means that you suffer not for me, in your bonds. The estate which I should leave behinde me of any estimation, is my

poor fame, in the memory of my friends, and therefore I would be curious of it, and provide that they repent not to have loved me. Since my imprisonment in my bed, I have made a meditation in verse, which I call a Litany; the word you know imports no other then supplication, but all Churches have one forme of supplication, by that name. Amongst ancient annals I mean some 800 years, I have met two Letanies in Latin verse, which gave me not the reason of my meditations, for in good faith I thought not upon them then, but they give me a defence, if any man; to a Lay man, and a private, impute it as a fault, to take such divine and publique names, to his own little thoughts. The first of these was made by Ratpertus a Monk of Suevia; and the other by S. Notker, of whom I will give you this note by the way, that he is a private Saint, for a few Parishes; they were both but Monks, and the Letanies poor and barbarous enough; yet Pope Nicolas the 5, valued their devotion so much, that he canonized both their Poems, and commanded them for publike service in their Churches: mine is for lesser Chappels, which are my friends, and though a copy of it were due to you, now, yet I am so unable to serve my self with writing it for you at this time, (being some 30 staves of 9 lines) that I must intreat you to take a promise that you shall have the first, for a testimony of that duty which I owe to your love, and to my self, who am bound to cherish it by my best offices. That by which it will deserve best acceptation, is, That neither the Roman Church need call it defective, because it abhors not the particular mention of the blessed Triumphers in heaven; nor the Reformed can discreetly accuse it, of attributing more than a rectified devotion ought to doe. The day before I lay down, I was at London, where I delivered your Letter for S^{r} Ed. Conway, and received another for you, with the copy of my Book, of which it is impossible for me to give you a copy so soon, for it is not of much lesse then 300 pages. If I die, it shall come to you in that fashion that your Letter desires it. If I warm again, (as I have often seen such beg-gers as my indisposition is, end themselves soon, and the patient as soon) you

and I shall speak together of that, before it be too late to serve you in that commandment. At this time I onely assure you, that I have not appointed it upon any person, nor ever purposed to print it: which later perchance you thought, and grounded your request thereupon. A Gent. that visited me yesterday told me that our Church hath lost Mr. *Hugh Broughton*, who is gone to the Roman side. I have known before, that *Serarius* the Jesuit was an instrument from Cardinall *Baronius* to draw him to *Rome*, to accept a stipend, onely to serve the Christian Churches in controversies with the Jews, without indangering himself to change of his perswasion in particular deductions between these Christian Churches, or being enquired of, or tempted thereunto. And I hope he is no otherwise departed from us. If he be, we shall not escape scandall in it; because, though he be a man of many distempers, yet when he shall come to eat assured bread, and to be removed from partialities, to which want drove him, to make himself a reputation, and raise up favourers; you shall see in that course of opposing the Jews, he will produce worthy things: and our Church will perchance blush to have lost a Souldier fit for that great battell; and to cherish onely those single Duellisms, between *Rome* and *England*, or that more single, and almost self-homicide, between the unconformed Ministers, and Bishops. I writ to you last week that the plague increased; by which you may see that my Letters ____ _____ ______
________ _____ ______ ________ opinion of the song, not that I make such trifles for praise; but because as long as you speak comparatively of it with mine own, and not absolutely, so long I am of your opinion even at this time; when I humbly thank God, I ask & have, his comfort of sadder meditations; I doe not condemn in my self, that I have given my wit such evaporations, as those, if they be free from prophaneness, or obscene provocations. S^r you would pity me if you saw me write, and therefore will pardon me if I write no more: my pain hath drawn my head so much awry, and holds it so, that mine eie cannot follow mine hand: I receive you therefore into my prayers, with mine own weary soul, and commend

my self to yours. I doubt not but next week I shall be good news to you, for I have mending or dying on my side, which is two to one. If I continue thus, I shall have comfort in this, that my B. Saviour exercising his Justice upon my two worldly parts, my fortune, and body, reserves all his mercy for that which best tasts it, and most needs it, my soul. I professe to you truly, that my lothnesse to give over now, seems to my self an ill sign, that I shall write no more.

Your poor friend, and Gods poor patient,
Jo. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 12 (31-37)

Also in Walton, 1658, no. 4 (134)

Gosse (I: 195)

Collation

Title *To Sir* H.G. *Letters*, pp. 31-37

To Sir H. Goodere Walton, pp. 134-41

l. 5 prety] pretty

l. 6 finde] find

l. 17 mouth,] mouth;

l. 19 use,] use

l. 21 days] dayes

l. 25 yet;] yet. world,] world

l. 30 means] meanes me,] me

l. 32 behinde] behind

l. 40 forme] form

l. 41 annals] annals,

l. 53 Saint,] Saint Parishes] parishes

l. 55 5,] 5.

l. 56 much,] much

l. 58 publike] publick

l. 74 than] then

l. 75 doe.] do:

l. 77 Ed. Conway] Edward Conway

l. 117 England,] England;

l. 119 Ministers,] Ministers

l. 128 &] and

l. 132 S^{r}] Sir,

l. 136 eie] eye

l. 143 B.] Blessed

Jo. Donne] J. Donne.

Textual Notes

ll. 121-22 These blanks occur in the text of the Letters, 1651 and in Walton.

Notes

l. 16 Tetane: tetanus

l. 38 A Litany: See Gardner, The Divine Poems (16-26).

ll. 42-51 These Litanies are found in Migne's Patrologia Latina, vol. lxxxvii, col. 39 and 42 (Grierson II: 239)

l. 77 S^{r} Ed. Conway accompanied Essex on the Cadiz expedition, where he may have met Donne. Conway later became Secretary of State through the patronage of Buckingham.

l. 94 Neither Gosse (I: 195) nor Bald (Life 201, n. 2) could date Broughton's rumored conversion. According to Gosse:

> [Hugh] Broughton, the Cambrian divine and Hebrew scholar, was one of the curiosities of the age, and centre round which gossip was always crystallizing. He had travelled in Germany with Morton, but at this time he was residing at Middleburg as chaplain to the English colony there. Broughton was supposed to have leanings towards Rome; he had attacked Beza, and was accused of indulging the foibles of recusant disputants. He was a peppery, vain, and whimsical person, and there was [sic] incessant rumors that he was going over to the Catholics, tempted by the offer of a cardinal's hat. One of these had doubtless just reached Donne, but all were baseless, and Broughton died in 1612, a loyal member of the Church of England. (I: 198)

Commentary

Gosse places this letter among those written by Donne in the fall of 1608. Gardner (Divine Poems, 81) thinks that "A Litany" echoes phrases of another of Donne's prose letters to Goodyer written in September 1608, which suggests that "A Litanie" was written at this time. Gardner's view supports Gosse's dating of the letter. Bald (Life 201) dates the letter in 1607 or 1608 but appears to favor 1608. He quotes S. E. Sprott, who also thinks 1608 the most likely year because the letter apparently refers to Donne's book Biathanatos, which uses sources from 1601 to 1608 and does not use important sources published in 1609 or later:

> Though the majority of Donne's most important sources were published or republished on the Continent between 1601 and 1608 (Azpilcueta, Azorius, Salon, Sayr, Soto), he did not make use of the third tome of Azorius (in which suicide was specifically treated), first published in 1612, or of Molina's fourth tome (in which suicide was discussed), first published in 1609 and soon widely influential. (The English Debate on Suicide from Donne to Hume [1961] 25n.; quoted in Bald, Life 201, n. 2)

I place the letter in August 1608. Donne's discussion of "A Litany" establishes that this letter was likely written in the fall of 1608 as Gardner suggests. Donne's reference in this letter to his illness and his reference in *Letters* No. 49 to writing from his Micham *Hospitall* on August 10 suggest that Donne's illness occurred in August.

54

To the same. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

IT is in our State ever held for a good sign to change Prison, and *nella Signoria de mi*, I will think it so, that my sicknesse hath given me leave to come to my *London*-prison. I made no doubt but my entrance-pain (for it was so rather then a sicknesse, but that my sadnesse putrefied and corrupted it to that name) affected you also; for nearer Contracts then generall Christianity, had made us so much towards one, that one part cannot escape the distemper of the other. I was therefore very carefull, as well to slack any sorrow which my danger might occasion in you; as to give you the comfort of having been heard in your prayers for me, to tell you as soon as my pain remitted what steps I made towards health, which I did last week. This *Tuesday* morning your man brought me a Letter, which (if he had not found me at *London*) I see he had a hasty commandment to have brought to *Micham*. S^r, though my fortune hath made me such as I am, rather a sicknesse and disease of the world then any part of it, yet I esteemed my self so far from being so to you, as I esteemed you to be far from being so of the world, as to measure men by fortune or events. I am now gone so far towards health, as there is not infirmity enough left in me for an assurance of so much noblenesse and truth, as your last Letter is to work upon, that might cure a greater indisposition then I am now in: And though if I had died, I had not gone without testimonies of such a disposition in you towards the reparation of my fortune, or preservation of my poor reputation; yet I would live, and be some such thing as you might not be ashamed to love. Your man must send away this hour

in which he visits me; and I have not yet
(for I came last night) offered to visit my
La. Bedford, and therefore have nothing to
say which should make me grudge this
straitnesse of time. He tels me he sends again
upon Thursday, and therefore I will make an
end of this Letter, and perfect it then. I
doubt my Letters have not come duly to
your hand, and that I writing in my dungeon of Michim without dating, have made
the Chronologie and sequence of my Letters perplexed to you; howsoever you shall
not be rid of this Ague of my Letters,
though perchance the fit change daies. I
have received in a narrow compasse three
of yours, one with the Catalogue of your
Books, another I found here left last Saterday by your man, and this which he
brought me this morning. Sir, I dare sit
no longer in my wastcoat, nor have any
thing worth the danger of a relapse to
write. I owe you so much of my health, as
I would not mingle you in any occasion of
repairing it, and therefore here ask leave to
kisse your hands, and bid you good morrow and farewell.

Your very true friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 20 (58-60)

Also in Gosse (I: 193)

Notes

ll. 2-3 nella Signoria de mi (Italian): (figuratively) within my power I will think it so. Donne apparently mistakenly uses "de," the Spanish form, instead of "di," the Italian form.

Commentary

This letter describes the beginning of Donne's recovery and is connected to the previous letter, which refers to the course of an illness that Donne contracted in August of 1608. In Letter No. 53 Donne states that he is near death; in this letter he states that he is recovering but fears a relapse. This letter is also connected to the preceding letter by Donne's reference to borrowing Goodyer's books. In Letter No. 53 Donne tells Goodyer that his books have made Donne's study a library; in this letter Donne tells Goodyer that he has received Goodyer's catalogue of books. This letter is connected to the following letter by further references to an illness, and also by Donne's statement that he had visited the Countess of Bedford, a visit he anticipates in this letter.

55

To my good friend S^{r} H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

THE Messenger who brought me
your Letter presented me a just excuse,
for I received them so late upon Thursday
night, that I should have dispatched before
I could begin; yet I have obeyed you drow-
sily, and coldly, as the night and my in-
disposition commanded: yet perchance
those hinderances have done good, for so
your Letters are the lesse curious, in which,
men of much leasure may soon exceed,
when they write of businesse, they having
but a little. You mention two more letters
then I send. The time was not too short
for me to have written them, (for I had an
whole night) but it was too short to work
a beleefe in me, that you could think it fit
to go two so divers ways to one end. I see
not, (for I see not the reason) how those
letters could well have concurred with
these, nor how those would well have been
drawn from them, in a businesse wholly
relating to this house. I was not lazie in
disobeying you, but (I thought) only thrifty,
and your request of those was not absolute,
but conditioned, if I had leasure. So though
that condition hinder them not, since ano-

ther doth (and you forethought, that one might) I am not stubborn. The good Countesse spake somewhat of your desire of letters; but I am afraid, she is not a proper Mediatrix to those persons, but I counsail in the dark. And therefore return to that, of which I have clear light, that I am always glad, when I have any way to expresse my love; for in these commandments you feed my desires, and you give me means to pay some of my debts to you: the interest of which I pay in all my prayers for you, which, if it please not God to shew here, I hope we shall finde again together in heaven, whither they were sent. I came this morning to say thus much, and because the Porter which came to Micham summoned me for this hour to London: from whence I am this minute returning to end a little course of Physick.

Friday 8 in the morning.   Yours very truly
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 64 (192 [190]) (p. 192 of the Letters repeats number 190)

Also in Gosse (I: 213)

Notes

l. 9 curious: i.e., careful. Donne consistently uses curious in this sense.

l. 31 Mediatrix: a female mediator

Commentary

I date this letter August 1608 because of Donne's references to being treated for an illness during the period that he lived at Mitcham. This letter replies to a letter from Goodyer in which Goodyer has obviously asked Donne to write a group of letters for him seeking a grant or preferment of some kind. Donne did not write two of the letters because he thought that Goodyer was making a mistake by approaching the two "diverse" groups (i.e., two rival factions) at court. Donne states that he has written the letters for what he considers to be the appropriate group whose business Goodyer's request was. Donne also warns Goodyer not to ask the Countess of Bedford for letters of support because they would not help him. Goodyer thus may have been appealing to the Howard faction or to the rising favorite Sir Robert Ker (later the Earl of Somerset) or, perhaps, to the Earl of Salisbury. None were friends of the Countess of Bedford. This letter may have been the covering letter which accompanied Letter No. 226 (Appendix II), probably written by Donne for Goodyer to recopy and send as his own letter to the Earl of Salisbury. Donne may have written letters throughout this episode for Goodyer, however, because this letter suggests that Goodyer is at the beginning of pursuing something, while the letter to Salisbury suggests that Goodyer is apologizing for having crossed Salisbury's wishes in the process of pursuing whatever it was that he has unsuccessfully pursued. See Stanley Johnson's "Sir Henry Goodere and Donne's Letters" (38-43) for a discussion of this letter and others having to do with Goodyer using Donne's letters. Goodyer's letter to Salisbury is endorsed 1609 and bound between manuscripts dated 31 March and 18 April in Cecil MSS., cxcv, f. 101 (Johnson 39, n. 5). This date would be consistent with dating Donne's letter in the autumn of 1608 if it refers to the beginning of Goodyer's business, the end of which is referred to in the letter to Salisbury in 1609.

56

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Cannot obey you, if you go to morrow
to *Parsons-green*, your company, that
place, and my promise are strong inducements,
but an Ague flouts them all, of
which I have had two such threatnings,
that I provide against it by a little Physick.
This is one fetter; but I have a pair: for I
attend Sir *Geo. Mores* answer in a little businesse,
of which I can have no account till
his return, so I am fastned here, till after
Sunday. As you are sure that I love you
thorowly, so think this a good expressing
of that, that I promise now, that I will certainly
goe with you on *Munday*, in despite
of these interruptions, and serve you with
my company to the *Bathe*; which journie,
it is time to hasten. But I pray think this
promise so much worth, that it may deserve
your comming this way on *Munday*, for I
make it with that reservation. God send
you Hawks and fortunes of a high pitch.
Your honest affectionate
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 69 (203-04)

Also in Gosse (I: 182-83)

Notes

l. 2 *Parsons-green*: perhaps a place where hawking was practised?

l. 8 Sir Geo. More: Donne's father-in-law

l. 16 Bathe [Bath]: a fashionable spa

Commentary

Gosse (I: 182) dates this letter early in 1608 (i.e., sometime after 25 March). Hester, in his facsimile reproduction of the *Letters*, dates the letter in the autumn of 1608, but I cannot find a reference to the letter in Bald, Bennett, or Shapiro, Hester's main sources for his dates. Hester does not give reasons for dating the letters. Donne's reference to his projected trip to Bath links this letter with No. 50, in which he also discusses his intention to go to Bath "some ten daies hence." Donne's reference to providing against illness "by a little Physick" links this letter with Nos. 50 to 55, which all contain references to his illness.

Goodyer was well known for his love of hawking. Ben Jonson describes Goodyer's hawking in Epigram LXXXV and Donne refers to it in Letters No. 30, as well as making it the basis for a conceit in stanza nine of his verse letter to Goodyer:

> Our soule, whose country' is heaven, and God her father,
>   Into this world, corruptions sinke, is sent,
> Yet so much in her travaile she doth gather,
>   That she returnes home, wiser then she went;
>
> It payes you well, if it teach you to spare,
>   And make you' asham'd, to make your hawks praise, yours,
> Which when herselfe she lessens in the aire,
>   You then first say, that high enough she toures.
> (Milgate 79, ll. 29-36)

Milgate (237) explains:

> ll. 33-36 The money Goodyer spends on travel is worth the cost if it teaches him thrift and to be ashamed of being praised for what he praises in his hawks. When a hawk diminishes itself in the air we praise it for soaring to the right place (but this is not praise worthy in men; and Goodyer has diminished himself, 'lessened' his estate, by extravagance--soaring too high).

The references to Goodyer's hawking by Jonson and Donne all seem to be between 1605 and 1610--perhaps this was Goodyer's most active period. His later poverty probably did not permit him to continue hawking on the same scale.

57

A. V. *Merced*. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Write not to you out of my poor Library, where to cast mine eye upon good Authors kindles or refreshes sometimes meditations not unfit to communicate to near friends; nor from the high way, where I am contracted, and inverted into my self; which are my two ordinary forges of Letters to you. But I write from the fire side in my Parler, and in the noise of three gamesome children; and by the side of her, whom because I have transplanted into a wretched fortune, I must labour to disguise that from her by all such honest devices, as giving her my company, and discourse, therefore I steal from her, all the time which I give this Letter, and it is therefore that I take so short a list, and gallop so fast over it, I have not been out of my house since I received your pacquet. As I have much quenched my senses, and disused my body from pleasure, and so tried how I can indure to be mine own grave, so I try now how I can suffer a prison. And since it is but to build one wall more about our soul, she is still in her own Center, how many circumferences soever fortune or our own perversnesse cast about her. I would I could as well intreat her to go out, as she knows whither to go. But if I melt into a melancholy whilest I write, I shall be taken in the manner: and I sit by one too tender towards these impressions, and it is so much our duty, to avoid all occasions of giving them sad apprehensions, as S. *Hierome* accuses *Adam* of no other fault in eating the Apple, but that he did it *Ne contristaretur delicias suas*. I am not carefull what I write, because the inclosed Letters may dignifie this ill favoured bark, and they need not grudge so course a countenance, because they are now to accompany themselves, my man fetched them, and therefore I can say no more of them then themselves say, M^{ris}. *Meauly* intreated me by her Letter to hasten hers; as I think, for by my troth I cannot read it. My Lady was dispatching in so much haste for *Twicknam*, as she gave no word to a Letter which I sent with yours;

of Sir Tho. Bartlet, I can say nothing, nor of the plague, though your Letter bid me: but that he diminishes, the other increases, but in what proportion I am not clear. To them at Hammersmith, and Mris Herbert I will do your command. If I have been good in hope, or can promise any little offices in the future probably, it is comfortable, for I am the worst present man in the world; yet the instant, though it be nothing, joynes times together, and therefore this unprofitableness, since I have been, and will still indevour to be so, shall not interrupt me now from being

Your servant and lover J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 44 (137-39)

Also in Gosse (I: 214-16)

Textual Notes

ll. 43-44 Mris Meauly: Jane Meautys

Notes

Heading A.V. Merced: A Vuestra Merced: "To your Worship," a playful use of the Spanish salutation (Gosse I: 214)

ll. 34-35 S. Hierome: St. Jerome (the Italian form)

ll. 36-37 Ne contristaretur delicias suas: so as not to sadden his pleasure

ll. 43-44 Mris Meautys: Jane Meautys was a lady-in-waiting to the Countess of Bedford. A few months after this letter was written, she married Sir William Cornwallis, the uncle of Donne's friend of the same name.

l. 49 Sir Thomas Bartlett:

> Sir Thomas Bartlett had been knighted at James's coronation; he came of an old Gloucestshire family, and married Mary,

> daughter of Sir John Dauntsey. Bartlett was appointed Carver to Queen Anne. In February 1611 he got into serious trouble for using "unseemly and desperate language in preferring petitions to the King for protection and relief." He was sent to the Tower and remained there until Dec. 1614, although immediately on his release he secured a patent for making pins. (Bald, Life 241, n. 4)

Donne mentions Bartlett in his Latin letter to Goodyer written in 1611. Goodyer was then lodging in Bartlett's house and, while Donne wants to see Goodyer, he does not want to visit him at Bartlett's house because he feels he is no longer welcome. In a letter to George Gerrard during Donne's visit to the Continent, however, Donne asks Garrard to write him a letter "to be left at my Lady Bartlet's, my lodging" (Letters No. 91, 252).

Commentary

Gosse dates this letter 1608 because of the reference to the plague. Bald (Life 176) states that this letter follows Letters No. 18 (48-54), and that Donne wrote it in September, "pausing in London for a few days on his return from a visit to Edward Jones in Essex." This cannot be correct: No. 18 must follow this letter. In Letters No. 18, Donne states that he "came this evening from Mr. Jones house in Essex" and that he is sending his man "with this letter early to London." Donne, therefore, must have been writing from Mitcham, and planning to go into London to dine with the Countess of Bedford "on Tuesday." He tells Goodyer he will write to him again the next day. This letter, then, cannot be both Donne's next letter to Goodyer (written before Donne's supper with the Countess of Bedford) and the letter written after Donne's supper with the Countess of Bedford. However, the similarities with _Letters_ No. 18 suggest that they were written close together in time.

This letter (No. 57) continues Donne's discussions about his feelings of uselessness and his depression which occupy _Letters_ No. 18, and, like No. 18, was written from Mitcham. Donne refers to the Countess of Bedford's rapid departure for Twickenham, which may refer to the same occasion of Donne's dining with the Countess in London as No. 18, although this would mean a change of plans for the Countess because in _Letters_ No. 18 Donne states that the court plans to return to Hampton the next day.

58

To Sir H. Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,
EVery tuesday I make account that I turn a great hour-glass, and consider that a weeks life is run out since I writ. But if I aske my self what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed it without hurting any, so may the Spider in my window. The primitive Monkes were excusable in their retirings and enclosures of themselves: for even of them every one cultivated his own garden and orchard, that is, his soul and body, by meditation, and manufactures; and they ought the world no more since they consumed none of her sweetnesse, nor begot others to burden her. But for me, if I were able to husband all my time so thriftily, as not onely not to wound my soul in any minute by actuall sinne, but not to rob and cousen her by giving any part to pleasure or businesse, but bestow it all upon her in meditation, yet even in that I should wound her more, and contract another guiltinesse: As the Eagle were very unnaturall if because she is able

to do it, she should pearch a whole day upon a tree, staring in contemplation of the majestie and glory of the Sun, and let her young Eglets starve in the nest. Two of the most precious things which God hath afforded us here, for the agony and exercise of our sense and spirit, which are a thirst and inhiation after the next life, and a frequency of prayer and meditation in this, are often envenomed, and putrefied, and stray into a corrupt disease: for as God doth thus occasion, and positively concurre to evill, that when a man is purposed to do a great sin, God infuses some good thoughts which make him choose a lesse sin, or leave out some circumstance which aggravated that; so the devill doth not only suffer but provoke us to some things naturally good, upon condition that we shall omit some other more necessary and more obligatory. And this is his greatest subtilty; because herein we have the deceitfull comfort of having done well, and can very hardly spie our errour because it is but an insensible omission, and no accusing act. With the first of these I have often suspected my self to be overtaken; which is, with a desire of the next life: which though I know it is not meerly out of a wearinesse of this, because I had the same desires when I went with the tyde, and enjoyed fairer hopes then now: yet I doubt worldly encombrances have encreased it. I would not that death should take me asleep. I would not have him meerly seise me, and onely declare me to be dead, but win me, and overcome me. When I must shipwrack, I would do it in a Sea, where mine impotencie might have some excuse; not in a sullen weedy lake where I could not have so much as exercise for my swimming. Therefore I would fain do something; but that I cannot tell what, is no wonder. For to chuse, is to do: but to be no part of any body, is to be nothing. At most, the greatest persons, are but great wens, and excrescences; men of wit and delightfull conversation, but as moales for ornament, except they be so incorporated into the body of the world, that they contribute something to the sustentation of the whole. This I made account that I begun early, when I understood the study of our laws: but was diverted by the worst voluptuousnes, which is an Hydroptique immoderate desire of humane learning and languages: beautifull ornaments to great fortunes; but mine needed an occupation, and a course which I thought I entred well into, when I submitted my self to such a service, as I thought might imployed those poor advantages, which I had. And there I stumbled too, yet I would try again: for to this hour I am nothing, or so little, that I am scarce subject and argument good enough for one of mine own letters: yet I fear, that doth not every proceed from a good root, that I am so well content to be lesse, that is dead. You, Sir, are farre enough from these descents, your vertue keeps you secure, and your naturall disposition to mirth will preserve you; but lose none of these holds, a slip is often as dangerous as a bruise, and though you cannot fall to my lownesse, yet in a much lesse distraction you may meet my sadnesse; for he is no safer which falls from an high tower into the leads, then he which falls from thence to the ground: make therefore to your self some mark, and go towards it alegrement. Though I be in such a planetary and erratique fortune, that I can do nothing constantly, yet you may finde some constancy in my constant advising you to it.

Your hearty true friend
J. Donne.

I came this evening from M. Jones *his house in* Essex, *where* M. Martin *hath been, and left a relation of* Captain Whitcocks *death, perchance it is no news to you, but it was to me; without doubt want broke him; for when* M. Hollands *company by reason of the plague broke, the Captain sought to be at* M^{ris}. Jones *house, who in her husbands absence declining it, he went in the night, his boy carrying his cloakbag, on foot to the Lord of* Sussex, *who going next day to hunt, the Captain not then sick, told him he would see him no more. A Chaplain came up to him, to whom he delivered an account of his understanding, and I hope, of his beliefe, and soon after dyed; and my Lord hath buryed him with his own Ancestors. Perchance his life needed a longer sicknesse, but a man may go faster and safer, when he enjoyes that day light of a clear and sound understanding, then in the night or twilight of an ague or other disease. And the grace of Almighty God doth every thing suddenly and hastily,*

> *but depart from us, it inlightens us, warms us, heats us, ravishes us, at once. Such a medicin, I fear, his inconsideration needed; and I hope as confidently that he had it. As our soul is infused when it is created, and created when it is infused, so at her going out, Gods mercy is had by asking, and that is asked by having. Lest your* Polesworth *carrier should cousen me, I send my man with this letter early to* London, *whither this Tuesday all the Court come to a Christening at* Arondell *house, and stay in town so that I will sup with the good Lady, and write again to morrow to you, if any thing be occasioned there, which concerns you, and I will tell her so; next day they are to return to* Hampton, *and upon friday the King to* Royston.

Source: *Letters* No. 18 (48-54)

Also in Walton, 1658, No. 3; Gosse (I: 190)

Textual Notes

To Sir Henry Goodere: Goodyer

Captain Whitcock: Edmunde Whitelocke

Notes

leads: The roofs of lower parts of a building, so called because they were covered in lead.

Commentary

This letter can be dated September 1608 by the reference to Captain Whitcock's (Whitelocke's) death in the postscript. His death is referred to in a letter by Dudley Carleton dated 20 September.

As the first line of this letter indicates, Donne wrote to Goodyer every Tuesday. This letter is one of a number from this period in Donne's life that express his sense of hopelessness about finding employment and of making any kind of contribution to the world. Gardner

(Divine Poems, p. 88) suggests that similar phrasing in this letter and Donne's poem "A Litanie" might mean that the poem was written around the same time as the letter--September 1608. For similarities compare lines 9-15 of the letter and stanza XV of the poem ("this world's sweet"); lines 16-29 of the letter and stanza XVI of the poem; and lines 36-40 of the letter and stanza XVII (l. 147) of the poem.

The imagery of body, protuberances, and community are repeated throughout Donne's poetry and other works, and are especially concentrated in Devotions upon Emergent Occasions.

Donne puts his news in the postscript, as he often does, although in this case he obviously heard about Whitelocke's death after he had composed the body of the letter. Edmund Whitelocke's death was described in a letter written by Dudley Carleton to Chamberlain dated 8 September 1608 (Bald, Life 189, n. 1) Most of those referred to in the postscript were members of a social circle that included Donne and Sir Tobie Mathews. Bald identifies M. Jones as Edward Jones of Essex (Life 176). and M. Martin as Richard Martin, a member of the Middle Temple who had a fairly successful career at the bar and who eventually became the Recorder of London, but who was best known by his contemporaries as a wit (190). M. Hollands was Henry Holland, who, like Donne, wrote an elegy on the death of Prince Henry. Henry Holland's father (Philemon Holland) was a close friend of Lord Harrington (Gosse I: 193). The Lord of Sussex was Robert Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who had succeeded to the title in 1593. He was at this time Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Essex. He was probably also a member of the Twickenham circle of Donne's acquaintances (Gosse I: 193).

Bald (Life 190) further points out that a number of these men who were acquainted with Donne were charged with knowledge of the Earl of Northumberland's alleged complicity in the gunpowder plot:

> as late as 1611 a certain Timothy Elkes was asserting that Captain Whitelocke, the Earl's retainer now dead, had had special knowledge of the Earl's actions on that famous 5 November, and that his most intimate friends and associates should be examined to substantiate the writer's charges against the Earl. Mentioned among those who were 'much conversant with Whitlocke' are 'Henego Jones,' 'Mr. Martin of the temple,' Sir Henry Goodyer, Mr. Ingram 'of the custome house,' and Thomas Hariot, the mathematician (S.P. 14, James I, vol. 66. no. 28). Apparently nothing came of Elkes's accusations, but all of those whose names were mentioned were friends of Donne, even Arthur Ingram, the financier, and nearly all of them belonged to a convivial group of which Donne was also a member.

59

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

> I Send not my Letters as tribute, nor interest, nor recompence, nor for commerce, nor as testimonialls of my love, nor provokers of yours, nor to justifie my custome of writing, nor for a vent and utterance of my meditations; For my letters are either above or under all such offices, yet I write very affectionately, and I chide and accuse my selfe of diminishing that affection which sends them, when I aske my selfe why. Only I am sure that I desire that you might have in your hands letters of mine of all kindes, as conveyances and deliverers of mee to you, whether you accept me as a friend, or as a patient, or as a penitent, or as a Bedesman, for I decline no jurisdiction, nor refuse any tenure. I would not open any doore upon you, but looke in when you open it. Angells have not, nor affect not other knowledge of one another then they list to reveale to one another. It is then in this only, that friends are Angells, that they are capable and fit for such revelations when they are offered. If at any time I seeme to study you more inquisitively, it is for no other end but to know how to present you to God in my prayers, and what to aske of him for you; For even that holy exercise may not be done inopportunely, no nor importunely. I finde little errour in that Grecians counsell who sayes, If thou aske any thing of

God, offer no sacrifice, nor aske elegantly, nor vehemently, but remember that thou would'st not give to such an asker. Nor in his other countryman, who affirmes sacrifice of blood to be so unproportionable to God, that perfumes, though much more spirituall, are too grosse; Yea words which are our subtlest and delicatest outward creatures, being composed of thoughts and breath, are so muddy, so thicke, that our thoughts themselves are so, because (except at the first rising) they are ever leavened with passions and affections. And, that advantage of neerer familiarity with God, which the Act of incarnation gave us, is grounded upon Gods assuming us, not our going to him. And, our accesses to his presence are but his descents into us. And, when we get any thing by prayer, hee gave us before hand the thing and the petition: for, I scarce thinke any ineffectuall prayer free from both sinne and the punishment of sinne: Yet as God seposed a seventh of our time for his exterior worship, and as his Christian Church early presented him a Type of the whole yeare in a Lent, and after imposed the obligation of canonique houres, constituting therby morall Sabbaths every day, I am far from dehorting those fixed devotions: But I had rather it were bestowed upon thanksgiving then petition, upon praise then prayer. Not that God is endeared by that, or wearied by this; All is one in the receiver, but not in the sender. And thankes doth both offices. For, nothing doth so innocently provoke new graces, as gratitude. I would also rather make short prayers then extend them, though God can neither bee surprised, nor besieged: For, long prayers have more of the man, as ambition of eloquence, and a complacency in the worke, and more of the devill by often distractions: For, after in the beginning wee have well intreated God to hearken, we speake no more to him. Even this letter is some example of such infirmity; which being intended for a letter is extended and strayed into a Homily. And whatsoever is not what it was purposed, is worse. Therefore it shall at last end like a letter by assuring you I am &c.

Source: *Poems* 1633 (353-55)

Also in Gosse (I: 227-29)

Collation

Poems: 1633, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

Letters: 1651, 54

Title: *To Sir* H.G. 1633 pp. 353-55
1635-39 pp. 279-81
1649-54 pp. 269-71
1669 pp. 267-68

To S^{r} H.G. *Letters* 1651, 54 pp. 109-12
1719 pp. 236-38

l. 2 testimonialls] testimonials 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 4 custome] custom 1719

l. 5 For] for 1651, 54 letters] Letters 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 6 offices,] offices; 1651, 54

l. 7 selfe] self 1651, 54 1719

l. 8 affection] affection, 1719 why.] why: 1651, 54
selfe] self 1651, 54 1719

l. 9 Only] Onely 1635-69 1651, 54 sure] sure, 1719

l. 10 letters] Letters 1651, 54 kindes] kinds 1719

l. 11 mee] me 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 13 Bedesman,] beadsman, 1651, 54 beads-man; 1719
nor] or 1651, 54

l. 15 looke] look 1651, 54 1719 Angells] Angels 1651, 54 1719

l. 16 another] another, 1635-1719 1651, 54 then] than 1719

l. 17 reveale] reveal 1651, 54 1719 only] onley 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 18 Angells] Angels 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 20 seeme] seem 1651, 54 study] studie 1651, 54

l. 21 end] end, 1649 God] God, 1635-69 aske] ask 1649 1651, 54
For] for 1649 1651, 54

l. 23 inopportunely,] inopportunely; 1649

l. 25 counsell] counsell, 1635-69 1651, 54 sayes] saies 1651, 54

l. 26 aske] ask 1651, 54

l. 27 would'st] wouldst 1635-69 wouldest 1651, 54

l. 28 asker.] asker: 1651, 54 in] is 1649-69
countryman] country man 1639 Countriman 1651, 54

l. 29 affirmes] affirms 1649 1651, 54 be] bee 1635-69

l. 31 grosse;] grosse. 1651, 54 subtlest] subtillest 1651, 54

l. 33 and] & 1635-69 muddy] muddie 1651, 54
thicke] thick 1649-69 1651, 54

l. 36 affections.] affections: 1651, 54 And,] And 1651, 54
neerer] Nearer 1635 1651, 54
familiarity] familiaritie 1635-69

l. 40 us.] us; 1651, 54 And,] and 1651, 54
prayer] praier 1635, 49

l. 41 hee] he 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 42 petition:] petition. 1651, 54 for] For 1651, 54
thinke] think 1651, 54

l. 43 sinne] sin 1651, 54 sinne] sin 1651, 54 Yet] yet 1651, 54

l. 44 exterior] exteriour 1635-69

l. 46 Type] type 1651, 54 yeare] year 1651, 54

l. 48 day,] day. 1639-69 day; 1651, 54 far] farre 1651, 54
fro] from 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 50 then] than 1635-69

l. 51 then] than 1635-69 prayer. Not] prayer; not 1651, 54
endeared] indeared 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 52 All] all 1651, 54

l. 53 sender. And thankes] sender. And thanks 1635-69
sender; And thanks 1719 sender: and thanks 1651, 54
offices. For,] offices. For 1635-69 offices; for 1651, 54

l. 55 then] than 1635-69

l. 56 bee] be 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 57 For,] for 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 58 complacency] complacencie 1651, 54

l. 59 worke] work 1651, 54 devill] Devil 1651, 54

l. 60 For,] For 1635 for, 1651, 54 wee] we 1635-69 1651, 54

l. 61 hearken] harken 1635 we] wee 1635 speake] speak 1651, 54
Even] Eye 1635

l. 62 letter] Letter 1651, 54 infirmity;] infirmitie; 1635
infirmitie, 1651, 54

l. 63 letter] letter, 1635-69 Letter, 1651, 54 and] & 1635, 39

l. 64 Homily] Homilie 1651, 54

l. 65 worse. Therefore] worse, therefore 1651, 54
letter] Letter 1651, 54

l. 66 am &c.] am, &c. 1649 1719 1651, 54

Notes

l. 13 Bedesman: a man of prayer; one who prays for the soul of another (O.E.D.)

l. 25 that Grecians counsell: (ref. unknown)

l. 38 Gods assuming us: See Donne's reference to the new Astronomie in Letter No. 21.

l. 44 seposed: to set aside; to set apart or reserve (O.E.D.)

l. 46 Type: that by which something is symbolized or figured; a symbol; emblem (O.E.D. 1470)

l. 47 canonique hours (i.e., canonical hours): stated times of the day appointed by the canons for prayers

l. 48 dehorting: to use exhortations to dissuade from; to advise against (O.E.D.)

l. 64 Homily: (a) a religious discourse addressed to a congregation; esp. a practical discourse with a view to spiritual edification. Applied specifically to the discourses contained in the Books of Homilies published in 1547 and 1563 for use in parish churches; (b) A serious admonition: a lecture (O.E.D.)

Commentary

Bald (*Life* 232) dates this letter, with letters 53 and 58, as having been written seven or eight years after Donne's marriage to Ann More in 1601. Keynes (p. 138) dates the letter 1609 following Gosse (I: 212), who also dates it as part of a group of letters from the early part of 1609. Bald (*Life* 232) suggests that the letter is one example of Donne's "deepening seriousness" at this time during which he was writing *Biathanatos* and *Pseudo-Martyr*. Donne's reference to his "custome of writing" refers to his practice of writing a weekly letter to Goodyer. The letter is typical of many letters to Goodyer in that it discusses the act of letter writing, friendship, and the religious significance of these two topics. It is, however, Donne's discussion of prayer that connects this letter with No. 58.

60

Madam. I will haue leaue to speake like a lovor, I am not
altogether one: for though I loue more then any yett my
loue hath not y^{e} same marke & end wth others. How charitably
you deale wth vs of these parts? y^{t} at this tyme of y^{e} yeare (when
the sunn forsakes vs) y^{o} come to vs & suffer vs not (out of y^{r} mercy)
to tast y^{e} bitternes of a winter: but Madam you owe me this
releif because in all that part of this sommer w^{ch} I spent in y^{r}
presence y^{o} doubled y^{e} heat and I liued vnder y^{e} rage of a hott
sonn & y^{r} eyes. that hart w^{ch} y^{o} melted then no winter
shall freise but it shall ever keepe that equall temper w^{ch}
you gaue it soft enough to receaue y^{r} impressions & hard
enough to retayne them. it must not tast to y^{o} as a
negligence or carelesnes y^{t} I haue not visited y^{r} Lad: in these
dayes of y^{r} being here call it rather a devout humylyty y^{t}
I thus aske leaue & bee content to beleeue from him y^{t} can
as impossibly ly to y^{o} as hate y^{o} y^{t} by commaundment I am sodenly
throwne out of y^{e} towne so dayly and diversly are wee tem-
pested y^{t} are not o^{r} owne. at my retourne (w^{ch} therfore I
will hasten) I wilbee bold to kiss y^{t} fayre vertuous hand w^{ch}

doth much in receaving this letter & may do easyly much
more in sending another to him whose best honor is that hee
is y^{r} leiuetenant of himself. Anonimus.

Source: Burley MS., f. 295

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 322) is "extremely doubtful" whether this letter was written by Donne because the letter is "marked out from the rest of the D.1 group by the signature Anonimus." Simpson points out, however, the similarities between this letter and a number of Donne's poems to the Countess of Bedford including the verse letters ("T' have written then," "This twilight of two yeares," "Though I be dead," and "You that are she") and "Twicknam Garden." As well, Simpson notes that the closing of this letter is similar to that of a letter to the Countess of Bedford printed in the 1651 Letters (p. 68): "Here therefore I humbly kisse your Ladiships fair learned hands, and wish you good wishes and speedy grants." Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") "rejects altogether" that this could be a Donne letter. If authorship can be determined by finding parallels in known Donne letters, this letter was written by Donne. If it is a Donne letter, it was written between 1607 and 1611, and probably in 1608. The Countess of Bedford leased Twickenham Park in 1607; Donne lived nearby in Mitcham between 1606 and 1611. The letter suggests particularly the verse letter "To the Countess of Bedford, You have refin'd me," which compares the Countess of Bedford to the sun bringing spring to the country. See the following letter to the Countess of Bedford (Burley MS. f. 303) for a similar closing.

The Tyrrany of a suddaine raging sicknes (comfortable in nothing but y^e violence of itt) assures y^t either itt or I are short liued having found either vertue or stubbernes inough in me to disdaine all bitternes y^t itt can make against my body, now assayles my mind & shews me y^t (by imprisoning me in my chamber itt is able to depriue me of y^t happines w^{ch} by y^r grace was allowed me when y^o gaue me the priueledg of having leaue to visit y^o. I confesse that this is my sicknes worst fitt & as fearefully ominous as Tamerlins last dayes black ensignes whose threatnings none scaped. Let not y^r charity therefore desdayne to coyne wth me, in an honest deceit, to breake this tempest of my sicknes, and since this letter hath my name, and hand, and words, and thoughts bee content to thinke itt me, & to give itt leaue thus to speake to y^o, though y^o vouchsafe not to speake to itt againe. It shall tell you truly (for from me itt sucked no levin of flattery) wth what height or rather lownes of devotion I reverence you: who besides the commandm^t of a noble birth, and y^r perswasiue eloquence of beauty, haue the advantage of the furniture of arts and languages, and such other vertues as might serve to iustify a reprobate fortune and y^e lowest condition: soe that if these things whereby some few other are named are made worthy, are to you but ornaments such might be left wthout leaving you vnperfect. To y^t treasure of y^r vertues whereof y^r fayre eyes curtesy is not the lest iewell I present this paper: and if itt be not to much boldnes in itt my excuse of not visiting y^o. And so kindly kissing y^r fayre hand y^t vouchsafes the receipt of these lines I take leaue.

Source: Burley MS., f. 303

Transcription Notes

l. 20 "are named are made": Simpson suggests "are named and are made." Another possibility is "are named and made."

l. 26 ~~take~~: appears crossed out at the end of line 26

Notes

l. 8 "Tamerlins last dayes black ensignes":

See Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, pt. i, Act iv, sc. i, and Act v, sc. i. On the first day of a siege Tamburlaine's colours were white to signify mercy, on the second day red to signify a warning, but on the third and succeeding days his ensigns were black to signify that no quarter would be given.

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 333) suggests that this letter is clearly Donne's, that it belongs to some date between 1608 and 1614, and that it was probably addressed to the Countess of Bedford because of the similarities with other Donne letters to her, and because this was the period during which Donne wrote most of his verse letters to the Countess. Simpson cites a number of similar passages in other Donne letters that make a convincing argument. For example, the letter begins with a description of the writer's illness which is similar to a letter by Donne to Sir Henry Goodyer: "I have often seen such beg-gars as my indisposition is, end themselves soon, and the patient as soon . . . . I have mending or dying on my side, which is two to one" (Letters [1651], pp. 34, 37). The writer describes the union of beauty, noble birth, and learning in the lady as he describes the Countess of Bedford in the verse letter "To the Countess of Bedford, Reason is our Soules left hand":

> Your birth and beauty are this Balme in you.
> But you of learning and religion,
> And vertue' and such ingredients, have made
> A methridate . . . . (Milgate 90),

and again in "To the Countess of Bedford, On New-yeares day":

> Hee [i.e., God] will best teach you, how you should lay out
> His stock of beauty, learning, favour, blood. (Milgate 99)

Furthermore, the closing of the letter echoes Donne's prose letter to the Countess of Bedford (Letters [1651], p. 68): "Here therefore I humbly kisse your Ladiship's fair learned hands."

In addition to the passages that Simpson cites, there are several other aspects of this letter which are characteristic of Donne's letters or verse letters to the Countess of Bedford that occur rarely in his letters to other great ladies. Donne typically emphasizes his extreme "lowness" compared to the social importance of the Countess, as he does in this prose letter. For example, in the verse letter "To the Countess of Bedford. Honour is so sublime perfection," Donne writes: "Care not then Madame,' how low your prayers lye." Again in "To the Countess of Bedford, At New Yeares Tide" he writes:

> When all (as truth commands assent) confesse
> All truth of you, yet they will doubt how I,
> One corne of one low anthills dust, and, lesse,
> Should name, know, or expresse a thing so high,
> And not an inch measure infinity. (Milgate 99)

Donne also defends himself against the charge of flattering the lady in this letter, as he also typically does in his letters to the Countess of Bedford. Donne concludes the verse letter "To the Countess of Bedford. Madame, You have refin'd mee" with two stanzas which defend his description of the Countess as true, although people may be suspicious of it as flattery. The penultimate stanza suggests his praises:

> . . . (as nice thinne Schoole divinity
> Serves heresie to furder or represse)
> Tast of Poetique rage, or flattery,
> And need not, where all hearts one truth professe.
> (Milgate 93)

This prose letter and the verse letters and prose letters written to the Countess show respect for the lady's intellect in a way that none of Donne's other correspondence with great ladies does.

62

[To] The same Person, to the Lord Hay.

Noblest Lord,

EVer to good ends the way and passage is fair and delightfull, of which no man can have had a better experience then I, who for my best end, pretending to his Majestie's service, have by the way the honour to be received into your care; And though my fortune, and my poor reputation importune me still, not to forsake my selfe, but endeavour to be something, yet this descent of your Lordship, and your taking knowledge of so unusefull a servant as I am, gives me contentment, and satisfaction enough, and so I may be sure to hold that room which your Lordship affords me in your self, I care not to be any thing else, it shall be my care that no fault make me unworthie of your Lordship's favour, since I feel alreadie that it is your Lordship's care, to remove me from this darknesse, in which my affection to do your Lordship service, can no way appear. I perceive not yet any purpose, to make any successor in that place in Ireland, if any be made, and not I, this would be the worst degree of the ill-fortune in that saile, that as I fear I should lose my hold in your Lordship for it was but your affection that admitted me into you, but then your judgment would examine me, and conclude me to be very unfit for you, If I be not fit for Ireland. Now your Lordship knows all my hopes and fears, and it is in your power to make my destinie, since to live in your memorie is advancement enough, and I shall by your Lordship's favour be bold to refresh by my often Letters, not as diffident solicitous from me, but as your Lordships auditors, to bring you in, the poor tribute of my thankfulnesse, who am, &c.

Source: T.M.C. No. 186 (332-33)

Also in Gosse (I: 202-203)

Textual Notes

l. 37 solicitous] compositor error for "solicitors"

Commentary

This letter immediately follows a letter of December 1608 in both the Tobie Mathews Collection and in Gosse. This arrangement, as far as it implies chronological order, is misleading. In T.M.C. 185 Donne responds to the information that he has been denied the office by King James; in T.M.C. 186 Donne has only heard that the position has not yet been filled. This letter, then, is the earliest letter extant that was written to James Hay, later Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle. Hay was a Scot who accompanied James I to England. He was good looking and extravagant and was one of the King's favorites, but he did not seek the power later attained by Somerset and Buckingham. Hay became a lifelong friend of Donne's.

Donne's reference to the darkness that he is in which does not permit him to show his affection to Lord Hay is an abbreviated statement of the idea that a person has substance only through work or some position in society. This view appears often in Donne's prose letters and occasionally in his poetry. For example, in "A Nocturnall" the persona states: "I am re-begot / Of absence, darknesse, death; things which are not." Elsewhere in his sermons he discusses that "stultifying lack of confidence," which he associates with a lack of social position and a consequent lack of opportunity for action.

63

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

THis 14 of November last I received yours of the 9, as I was in the street going to sup with my Lady Bedford, I found all that company forepossessed with a wonder why you came not last saturday. I perceive, that as your intermitting your Letters to me, gave me reason to hope for you, so some more direct addresse or conscience of your businesse here, had imprinted in them an assurance of your comming, this Letter shall but talke, not discourse; it shall but gossip, not consider, nor consult, so it is made halfe with a prejudice of being lost by the way. The King is gone this day for Royston: and hath left with the Queen a commandment to meditate upon a Masque for Christmas, so that they grow serious about that already; that will hasten my Lady Bedfords journey, who goes within ten days from hence to her Lord, but by reason of this, can make no long stay there. Justinian the Venetian is gone hence, and one Carraw come in his place: that State hath taken a fresh offence at a Friar, who refused to absolve a Gentleman, because he would not expresse in confession what books of Father Paul, and such, he knew to be in the hands of any others; the State commanded him out of that territory in three hours warning, and he hath now submitted himself, and is returned as prisoner for Mantua, and so remains as yet. Sir H. Wootton who writ hither, addes also that upon his knowledge there are 14000 as good Protestants as he in that State. The Duke Joyeuse is dead, in Primont, returning from Rome, where M. Mole who went with the L. Rosse, is taken into the Inquisition, and I see small hope of his recovery (for he had in some translations of Plessis books talked of Babylon and Antichrist. Except it fall out that one Strange a Jesuit in the Tower, may be accepted for him. To come a little nearer my self, Sir Geffery Fenton one of his Majesties Secretaries in Ireland is dead; and I have made some offer for the place, in preservation whereof, as I have had occasion to imploy all my friends, so I

> have not found in them all (except Bedford) more hast and words (for when those two are together, there is much comfort even in the least) then in the L. Hay. In good faith he promised so roundly, so abundantly, so profusely, as I suspected him, but performed what ever he undertook, (and my requests were the measures of his undertakings) so readily and truly, that his complements became obligations, and having spoke like a Courtier, did like a friend. This I tell you, because being farre under any ability of expressing my thankfulnesse to him by any proportionall service, I do, as much as I can, thank him by thanking of you, who begot, or nursed these good impressions of me in him. Sir, as my discretion would do, my fortune doth bring all my debts into one hand, for I owe you what ever Court friends do for me, yea, whatsoever I do for my self, because you almost importune me, to awake and stare the Court in the face. I know not yet what conjecture to make of the event. But I am content to go forward a little more in the madnesse of missing rather then not pretend; and rather wear out, then rust. It is extreme late; and as this Letter is nothing, so if ever it come to you, you will know it without a name, and therefore I may end it here.

Source: Letters No. 46 (143-46)

Also in Gosse (I: 198-200)

Notes

l. 17 a Masque for Christmas: The Countess of Bedford was a close friend of the Queen's and a prominent participant in the masques at court.

l. 22 Justinian the Venetian: Giustiniani, the ambassador of Venice (Gosse I: 200)

l. 23 Carraw: Noel de Carow (Gosse I: 200): Justinian's replacement that State: Venice

l. 27 Father Paul: unidentified

l. 32 Mantua (in Italy)

l. 33 Sir H. Wootton: Sir Henry Wotton, Donne's friend and the Ambassador to Venice at this time

l. 36 Duke Joyeuse [Cardinal de Joyeuse]: a French Cardinal who baptized Louis XIII as Pope Paul V's representative

Primont (in Italy)

l. 37 M. Mole: John Mole or Molle, the tutor of Lord Roos (L. Rosse), was arrested by the inquisition on his arrival in Rome in early 1608, Donne says because he had written of Babylon and the Antichrist in some translations of the works of Duplessis-Mornay. Wotton wrote many years later that it was the possession of King James's works which got Mole into trouble (Smith II: 473). Mole remained a prisoner for thirty years, resisting attempts to convert him, and finally dying in prison at the age of eighty-one (Smith II: 473). Mole became a heroic figure in the Protestant world. Feil suggests that Tobie Mathew was responsible for Mole's imprisonment with the connivance of Lord Roos. Mathew attempted to convert a number of young English travellers, including Lord Roos, and having Mole imprisoned gave Mathew the opportunity to try to influence Roos.

l. 38 L. Rosse: Lord Roos, William Cecil, grandson of the Earl of Exeter, came to Italy in 1608 with his tutor, John Mole, and with a friend, Lord St. John, and his tutor, Mr. Lomax. Lomax converted to Catholicism.

1. 52 L. Hay: James Hay, later Earl of Carlisle and Viscount Doncaster. This letter dates the beginning of their friendship, which lasted until Donne's death.

Commentary

The date of this can be established with certainty. The month and day are given in the letter and the year (1608) can be determined by Donne's reference to the death of Sir Geoffrey Fenton, one of the king's secretaries in Ireland. This letter is unusually full of news for Donne, who comments that it is "but gossip." A significant portion of this letter repeats news that Donne has recently received in a letter from Sir Henry Wotton.

64

A Letter from Doctor Donne to the Lord Hay, acknowledging former courtesies, and cleering himself from an accusation.

Noblest Lord,

THe same Conscience of mine own unworthinesse, which kept me so long from daring to put my self into your Lordship's sight, provokes me to write now, we are ever justlie most tender and jealous of those things, to which, we have weakest Title; And therefore finding how little pretence, I have to your Lordship's favour, I am not onlie diligent, but curious, not to forfeit it. I have been told, that when your Lordship did me that extream favour, of presenting my name, his Majestie remembred me, by the worst part of my historie, which was my disorderlie proceedings, seaven years since, in my nonage. As your Lordships earnestnesse, and alacritie in doing good, and almost unthriftiness, in multiplying and heaping your favours, gave me scarce leisure to consider how great your first favour of promising was, because you overtook it presentlie with a greater, which was the performing it; so I humblie beseech your Lordship to adde another to these, not to be too apprehensive of any suspition, that there lies upon me anie dishonourable staine, or can make my King have anie prejudice against me, for that intemperate and hastie act of mine: for the Lord Chancellor and his brother in law, Sr. G.M. whose daughter I married, would both be likelie, and will be readie to declare it, for his Majestie's satisfaction, or your Lordships, that their displeasure, commenced so long since, should be thought to continue still, or interrupt any of my fortunes. This I say, lest I might have seemed to have betraied your Lordship, and lest my ill fortune, by having got manie victories upon my selfe, should dare to reach at your Lordship, and think to work upon your constancie, and perseverance in doing good, by making you repent your own act in favouring me. I am, my Lord, somewhat more worthie of your favour than I was at first; because everie degree of your Lordship's favour is a great dignitie. I am therefore in much confidence, that your Lordship, which disdained me not then, will at least allow your own work in me, and as you have laid a foundation: so you will by preferring me still, in your good opinion, build me up to such a capacitie, and worthinesse, as may be fit for your Lordship to dwell in; To which I only bring an honest and intire devotion to do your Lordship service, all the rest is your Lordship's work, whose hand I humblie kisse, and beg a pardon for saluting your Lordship herein, by so bold a way as writing.

Source: T.M.C. No. 185 (330)

Also in Gosse (I: 201)

Textual Notes

l. 15 nonage: Bald (Life 161) suggests that "nonage" should be "my marriage."

Notes

l. 9 curious: careful (O.E.D., 1781), solicitous (O.E.D., 1697)

l. 30 Sr. G.M.: Sir George More

Commentary

As Gosse notes, the letter can be dated, first, by Donne's reference to his marriage, seven years ago, and, second, because this letter follows a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer written in November in which he tells Goodyer that Hay has promised to recommend him for the position of one of His Majesty's secretaries in Ireland, a position made available by the death of Geoffrey Fenton. As this letter indicates, Donne was unsuccessful in obtaining the secretaryship because King James remembered the circumstances of his marriage, but Donne wants Lord Hay to know that he has been forgiven by Sir George More. Donne's reference to himself in this letter as fortune's enemy echoes Burley MS. f. 294.

65

S^{r}.

All this while like a silke worme I worke myself into a bottome or clew
and by my former sylence and contemplation of y^{r} honorable
merits I am so increased in my inward loue and desire to doe
you service, as when you shalbee pleased to vntwine me, you shall
find length enough in my desires though perhaps my thred
of performance be very small. If therefore in the accompts
you cast of y^{r} frends you do not summ̲ me vpp amongst the rest
it will very much greiue and molest me, bycause though

others take me only for a cypher, to increase the number of
and I am content
theire frends yet I am ambitious to be reputed of some number
wth you whose frendship I know and iudgment admitts
no cypher. And bycause I cannot but communicate wth my frends y^{t}
w^{ch} I know I wil tell you y^{t} it did much reioyce my hart when I
heard my L^{d}. E by his ho^{ble}. testimony giue great reputation to the L^{d} Amb^{r}
of Venice as to one of very great fidelitie and excellent dexterity
and skill in publike businesses of w^{ch} he had giuen acceptable
proofe and experience to his Mj^{tie}: now as I doubt not but your
desyre to merit him, so (if y^{o} willbe pleased not to thinke I presume
to advise you) besyds y^{t} satisfaction of y^{r} excellent dispatches
nothing wilbe more acceptable then some such models and frames &
I speake this (wthout commission) for y^{t} I know both y^{r} dispositions and I
desire to encrease his good opinion of y^{o}.

Source: Burley MS., f. 301

Transcription Notes

1. 9 "I am content" is added in the margin before "others." The phrase should be inserted after "frends" in line 10.

Commentary

Simpson (*Prose Works* 331) suggests that the letter was written by Donne to Wotton in 1608 or 1609:

> This letter is clearly addressed to Wotton during his tenure of the post of English ambassador at Venice. It implies that Wotton had already held the post long enough to give considerable proofs of his skill, but it also evidently belongs to his first embassy at Venice (1604-10), since his re-appointment in 1616 and again in 1621 afforded such evidence of the king's confidence in him as needed no support in the narration of casual remarks like that recorded in this letter. 'My L^{d}. E.' is probably Lord Ellesmere, who was made a baron on 19 July 1603, and Lord Chancellor on 24 July. Moreover, all the correspondence contained in these pages of the Burley MS. belongs to a period earlier than 1616.
>
> The letter is probably from Donne; the opening sentence has the ring of his style.

Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") suggests that this letter was "possibly" written by Donne.

The reference to Wotton possibly collecting pictures for "My L^{d}. E." is consistent with Wotton's collecting Italian art for English connoisseurs, especially Buckingham and Salisbury (Smith I: 60).

The image of himself as a "silke worme" with a "small thread of performance" invites a phallic interpretation. It also reflects the hierarchical view of nature as a "great chain of being." Donne compares himself to less than an ant ("one corn of one low ant hill's dust") in a verse letter to the Countess of Bedford to express his comparative lack of importance to the Countess of Bedford. The image of himself as a cypher (a zero, a nothing) is similar to other descriptions of himself during this period. This image and the others reflect his feelings of worthlessness and isolation caused by his lack of employment.

1609

66

To all my friends: Sir H. Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,

I Am not weary of writing; it is the course but durable garment of my love; but I am weary of wanting you. I have a minde like those bodies, which have hot Livers, and cold stomachs; or such a distemper as travelled me at Paris; a Fever, and dysentery: in which, that which is physick to one infirmity, nourishes the other. So I abhor nothing more than sadnesse, except the ordinary remedy, change of company. I can allow my self to be Animal sociale, appliable to my company, but not gregale, to herd my self in every troup. It is not perfectly true which a very subtil, yet very deep wit Averroes says, that all mankinde hath but one soul, which informes and rules us all, as one Intelligence doth the firmament and all the Starres in it; as though a particular body were too little an organ for a soul to play upon. And it is as imperfect which is taught by that religion w^{ch} is most accommodate to sense (I dare not say to reason (though it have appearance of that too) because none may doubt but that that religion is certainly best, which is reasonablest) That all mankinde hath one protecting Angel; all Christians one other, all English one other, all of one Corporation and every civill coagulation or society one other; and every man one other. Though both these opinions expresse a truth; which is, that mankinde hath very strong bounds to cohabit and concurre in other then mountains and hills during his life. First, common, and mutuall necessity of one another; and therefore naturally in our defence, and subventions we first flie to our selves; next, to that which is likest, other men. Then, naturall and inborn charity, beginning at home, which perswades us to give, that we may receive: And legall charity, which makes us also forgive. Then an ingraffing in one another, and growing together by a custome of society: and last of all, strict friendship, in which band men were so presumed to be coupled, that our Confessor King had a law, that if a man be killed, the murderer shall pay a sum *felago suo*, which the interpreters call, *fide ligato, et comite vitae*. All these bands I willingly receive, for no man is lesse of himself then I: nor any man enough of himself. To be so, is all one with omnipotence. And it is well marked, that in the holy Book, wheresoever they have rendered Almighty, the word is Self-sufficient. I think sometimes that the having a family should remove me farre from the curse of *Vae soli*. But in so strict obligation of Parent, or Husband, or Master, (and perchance it is so in the last degree of friendship) where all are made one, I am not the lesse alone, for being in the midst of them. Therefore this *oleum laetitiae*, this balme of our lives, this alacrity which dignifies even our service to God, this gallant enemy of dejection and sadnesse, (for which and wickednesse the Italian allows but one word, *Triste*: And in full condemnation whereof it was prophesied of our blessed Saviour, *Non erit tristis*, in his conversation) must be sought and preserved diligently. And since it grows without us, we must be sure to gather it from the right tree. They which place this alacrity only in a good conscience, deal somewhat too roundly with us, for when we aske the way, they shew us the town afar off: Will a Physitian consulted for health and strength, bid you have good sinews and equall temper? It is true, that this conscience is the resultance of all other particular actions; it is our triumph and banquet in the haven; but I would come towards that also, (as Mariners say) with a merry winde. Our nature is Meteorique, we respect (because we partake so) both earth and heaven; for as our bodies glorified shall be capable of spirituall joy, so our souls demerged into those bodies, are allowed to partake earthly pleasure. Our soul is not sent hither, only to go back again: we have some errand to do here: nor is it sent into prison, because it comes innocent: and he which sent it, is just. As we may not kill our selves, so we may not bury our selves: which is done or endangered in a dull Monastique sadnesse, which is so much worse then jolity (for upon that

word I durst _______ _____ _______ _____
_____ _______ And certainly despair is infinitly worse, then presumption: both because this is an excesse of love, that of fear; and because this is up, that down the hill; easier, and more stumbling. Heaven is expressed by singing, hell by weeping. And though our blessed Saviour be never noted to have laughed, yet his continuance is said ever to be smiling. And that even moderate mirth of heart, and face, and all I wish to my self, and perswade you to keep. This alacrity is not had by a general charity and equanimity to all mankinde, for that is to seek fruit in a wildernesse: nor from a singular friend, for that is to fetch it out of your own pocket: but the various and abundant grace of it, is good company. In which no rank, no number, no quality, but ill, and such a degree of that as may corrupt and poyson the good, is exempt. For in nearer then them, your friend, and somewhat nearer then he, in your self you must allow some inordinatenesse of affections and passions. For it is not true that they are not natural, but stormes and tempests of our bloud and humours: for they are naturall, but sickly. And as the Indian priests expressed an excellent charity, by building Hospitalls and providing chirurgery for birds and beasts lamed by mischance, or age, or labour: so must we, not cut off, but cure these affections, which are the bestiall part.

Source: Letters, No. 17 (42-48)

Also in Gosse (II: 7-10)

Textual Notes

ll. 99-100	These blanks appear in the text of the Letters, 1651. The passage may have been censored, or it may simply have been indecipherable.
Closing	There is no signature or closing for this letter.

Notes

ll. 11-12	*Animal sociale*: social animal
l. 12	*gregale*: gregarious (social but not gregarious)
l. 15	*Averroes* (1126-98): A Muslim doctor born at Cordova, and a philosopher, the author of a famous commentary on Aristotle (*Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 4th ed., 53).
l. 21	"that religion": Roman Catholicism
l. 43	ingraffing: ingrafting
l. 47	our Confessor king: Edward the Confessor
l. 49	*felago suo*: The law demands that the lord of a murder victim shall have recompense from his murderer, or, if he does not have a lord, his *Felagus*, that is, the one bound to him in faith--*fide ligatus*. See Ducange s.v.
ll. 49-50	*fide ligato, et comite vitae*: to him bound by faith and the companion of his life
l. 58	*Vae soli*: Woe to him who is alone.
l. 64	*oleum laetitiae*: (oil of happiness) balm
ll. 70-71	*Non erit tristis*: He will not be sad.

Commentary

Gosse (II: 7) dates this letter "late 1612," but Gosse is incorrect. This letter, as Bennett states in "Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*" (123, n. 15), immediately precedes *Letters* No. 34, which refers to Donne's discussion of "alacrity" in this letter. *Letters* No. 34 is dated by Bald around 29 January 1609 (see the commentary on that letter). The contents of this letter also suggest 1609 rather than late 1612. Donne discusses man as a social being, and uses the topic to warn Goodyer about attractive but "imperfect" Catholic doctrine and the importance of social bonds. Within a general discussion of "alacrity," he also discusses the body and soul, suicide, and charity to friends who may be subject to "affections and passions." These topics point to his concern over attempts to convert Goodyer to Catholicism. Donne's concept of "alacrity" is a kind of determined cheerfulness which is a requirement of good Christians because they must have confidence in a just God. It is an imitation of Christ's demeanor in the world. For ordinary men, however, alacrity is generated not simply by God or by the individual, but by "good company." Alacrity may have been Donne's remedy for his own depression during 1609 as well as one he recommends for Goodyer.

Donne's examples in this letter are also more characteristic of 1609 than of 1611. Near the beginning of the letter he discusses the stars and the firmament, and at the end he takes an example from the lives of primitive people, the "Indian priests" who cared for animals. These examples each suggest different Donne verse letters to the Countess of Huntington. Donne discusses primitive people in "That unripe side of earth" and the heavens in "Man to Gods Image." Both letters are believed to have been written before 1610. See the commentary on the following letter for a discussion of these verse letters.

Donne's reference to his illness in Paris must refer to his visit there in 1605/6 rather than his second visit there with Sir Robert Drury. Hester (xix) dates this letter December 1611 but, even if it were written on Donne's second trip to the Continent with Sir Robert Drury, it would have had to have been written after they visited Paris in March 1611/12.

67

To my very true and very good friend
Sir Henry Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,

AT some later reading, I was more affected with that part of your Letter, which is of the book, and the namelesse Letters, then at first. I am not sorry, for that affection were for a jealousie or suspicion of a flexibilty in you. But I am angry, that any should think, you had in your Religion peccant humours, defective, or abundant, or that such a booke, (if I mistake it not) should be able to work upon you; my comfort is, that their judgment is too weak to endanger you, since by this it confesses, that it mistakes you, in thinking you irresolved or various: yet let me be bold to fear, that that sound true opinion, that in all Christian professions there is way to salvation (which I think you think) may have been so incommodiously or intempestively sometimes uttered by you; or else your having friends equally near you of all the impressions of Religion, may have testified such an indifferency, as hath occasioned some to further such inclinations, as they have mistaken to be in you. This I have feared, because hertofore the inobedient Puritans, and now the over-obedient Papists attempt you. It hath hurt very many, not in their conscience, nor ends, but in their reputation, and ways, that others have thought them fit to be wrought upon. As some bodies are as wholesomly nourished as ours, with Akornes, and endure nakednesse, both which would be dangerous to us, if we for them should leave our former habits, though theirs were the Primitive diet and custome: so are many souls well fed with such formes, and dressings of Religion, as would distemper and misbecome us, and make us corrupt towards God, if any humane circumstance moved it, and in the opinion of men, though none. You shall seldome see a Coyne, upon which the stamp were removed, though to imprint it better, but it looks awry and squint. And so, for the most part, do mindes which have received divers impressions. I will not, nor need to you, compare the Religions. The channels of Gods mercies run through both fields; and they are sister teats of hisgraces, yet both diseased and infected, but not both alike. And I think, that as Copernicisme in the Mathematiques hath carried earth farther up, from the stupid Center; and yet not honoured it, nor advantaged it, because for the necessity of appearances, it hath carried heaven so much higher from it: so the Roman profession seems to exhale, and refine our wills from earthly Drugs, and Lees, more then the Reformed, and so seems to bring us nearer heaven; but then that carries heaven farther from us, by making us pass so many Courts, and Offices of Saints in this life, in all our petitions, and lying in a painfull prison in the next, during the pleasure, not of him to whom we go, and who must be our Judge, but of them from whom we come, who know not our case. Sir, as I said last time, labour to keep your alacrity and dignity, in an even temper: for in a dark sadnesse, indifferent things seem abominable, or necessary, being neither; as trees, and sheep to melancholique night-walkers have unproper shapes. And when you descend to satisfie all men in your own religion, or to excuse others to al; you prostitute your self and your understanding, though not a prey, yet a mark, and a hope, and a subject, for every sophister in Religion to work on. For the other part of your Letter, spent in the praise of the Countesse, I am always very apt to beleeve it of her, and can never beleeve it so well, and so reasonably, as now, when it is averred by you; but for the expressing it to her, in that sort as you seem to counsaile, I have these two reasons to decline it. That that knowledge which she hath of me, was in the beginning of a graver course, then of a Poet, into which (that I may also keep my dignity) I would not seem to relapse. The Spanish proverb informes me, that he is a fool which cannot make one Sonnet, and he is mad which makes two. The other stronger reason, is my integrity to the other Countesse, of whose worthinesse though I swallowed your opinion at first upon your words, yet I have had since an explicit faith, and now a knowledge: and for her delight (since she

descends to them) I had reserved not only
all the verses, which I should make, but all
the thoughts of womens worthinesse. But
because I hope she will not disdain, that I
should write well of her Picture, I have o-
beyed you thus far, as to write: but intreat
you by your friendship, that by this occasi-
on of versifying, I be not traduced, nor
esteemed light in that Tribe, and that house
where I have lived. If those reasons which
moved you to bide me write be not con-
stant in you still, or if you meant not that I
should write verses; or if these verses be too
bad, or too good, over or under her under-
standing, and not fit; I pray receive them,
as a companion and supplement of this
Letter to you; and as such a token as I use
to send, which use, because I wish rather
they should serve (except you wish other-
wise) I send no other; but after I have told
you, that here at a Christning at Peekam, you
are remembred by divers of ours, and I
commanded to tell you so, I kisse your
hands, and so seal to you my pure love,
which I would not refuse to do by any la-
bour or danger.

Your very true friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 34 (100-05)

Also in Gosse (II: 77-80)

Notes

l. 52 Copernicisme: the theories of Copernicus

l. 120 Peekam: Peckham, the home of Sir Thomas Grymes, Donne's brother-in-law (Grymes married Donne's wife's sister, Margaret)

Commentary

This letter is the covering letter for an enclosed verse letter written by Donne for the Countess of Huntington at Goodyer's request. Two verse letters to the Countess of Huntington survive; there may have been others. Milgate (242-43) is inclined to date "To the Countess of Huntington" ('That unripe side of earth') as the first of these two written about 1605, and "To the Countess of Huntington" ('Man to God's image') as the second written about 1608-9. Gosse (II: 77-80) dates "Man to God's image" April 1615 and implies that this prose letter accompanied it. Bald, however, dates this prose letter in 1609. He links it with Letters No. 80 (225).

> In Letters, p. 225, Donne refers to Goodyer's projected trip to escort Lady Huntingdon . . . . Neither letter is dated, but the two letters are clearly close together in time, and the second refers to 'a Christning at Peckham'. Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Grymes, was baptized on 30 Dec. 1615; Mrs. Donne was presumably the godmother. This fact seems to have caused Gosse to date the letter 1615, but it is most unlikely, from its contents, that it should have been written after Donne's ordination. Other Grymes children were baptized as follows: Martha, on 4 Oct. 1607; Arthur, on 29 Jan. 1609; and Thomas, on 28 June 1610 (W. H. Blanch, Y^e Parish of Camberwell, 1875, pp. 54-55). 1607 seems too early for the letter, and 1610 too late, so that 1609 is the likeliest year. (Life 180n.)

Bald (180) also suggests that this letter might have been the covering letter for the verse letter "Man to Gods image," which he says "pretty certainly dates from this time."

This letter contains parallels with the verse letter "To the Countess of Huntington" ("That unripe side of earth") which suggest that it rather than "Man to Gods image" accompanied the prose letter. Both use naked primitives as examples: in the verse letter they are a pitiable example of ignorance that is as far below Donne as he is below the Countess and below her notice; in the prose letter they are souls capable of being nourished by more primitive religious customs which, like their diet of acorns and nakedness, would not be good for civilized man. In the verse letter Donne suggests that primitive people live in a paradoxical state of sin and innocence because they are so far away from

Paradise that news of Adam's fall has not yet reached them. In some ways, then, these people are like Adam before the fall and can receive God's mercies. The implication of this is what Donne states in the prose letter: primitive people's customs and religions may be suitable for them, but not for us.

The second parallel is Donne's discussion of the distance between heaven and earth. In both cases Donne discusses a new, larger world with a greater distance between heaven and earth. In the verse letter the Countess is the epitome of virtue; she is heavenly; she looks down on earth "from extreme hights" and

> Where we are at our hights, you but appeare
> We are but clouds you rise from, our noone-ray
> But a soule shadow not your breake of daye.
> (Milgate 84, ll. 78-80)

But those newly discovered people on the "unripe" side of the earth are so far from her transcendent height that to her they seem either "mist" or "nothing." In his prose letter Donne discusses how both Copernicus and the Catholic church have increased the distance between heaven and earth: Copernicus by his calculations of the physical distance, and the Catholic church by interposing the Saints, Purgatory and other obstacles between men and Heaven.

Two other parallels occur between this letter and two of Donne's poems. The first echoes Donne's first verse letter to the Countess of Bedford, "Reason is our Soules left hand," which was probably written in 1608. It begins,

> Reason is our Soules left hand, Faith her right,
> By these wee reach divinity, that's you;
> Their loves, who have the blessing of your sight.
> (Milgate 90, ll. 1-4)

In the prose letter Donne tells Goodyer:

> The other stronger reason [why he should not write a poem for the Countess of Huntington], is my integrity to the other Countesse, of whose worthinesse though I swallowed your opinion at first upon your words, yet I have had since an explicit faith, and now a knowledge.

Donne's statement must be a deliberate paraphrase of his first verse letter to the Countess of Bedford.

The second aspect of this letter, which is found in other prose letters, in his sermons, and in his poetry, is his use of what appears to be a favorite metaphor comparing stamping or restamping a coyne to a change in one's life. His use of it here suggests that he did not think of himself as a Catholic who converted to Anglicanism because he is critical of "coins" (men) whose first impressions of religion have been effaced. Donne uses this image again when announcing to Sir Edward Herbert that he has taken orders (see Letter No. 148).

There are two final comments to be made on phrases in this letter which have been frequently quoted. The first is Donne's phrase that "he is a fool which cannot make one Sonnet, and he is mad which makes two." This has been taken to mean that Donne has already written one poem for the Countess of Huntington and is reluctant to write another. In fact, Donne is referring to writing for different ladies and the foolishness of pursuing two at once. The second phrase is Donne's reference to writing a verse letter on the "Countess's picture." Milgate (243) appears to interpret this phrase literally, but Donne here is referring to the Countess of Huntington as a "picture" or copy of the Countess of Bedford, and it is to the enclosed verse letter, not a lost one, that he refers. Donne uses this idea again in the unfinished verse letter to the Countess of Bedford:

> Remote low Spirits, which shall ne'r read you,
> May in lesse lessons finde enough to doe,
> By studying copies, not Originals.
> (Milgate 104, ll. 23-25)

and in "A Letter to the Lady Carey, and Mrs. Essex Riche," where he compares Lady Carey to an entire art gallery, albeit a short one, and her sister to her mirror image:

> I should write here, as in short Galleries
> The Master at the end large glasses ties,
> So to present the roome twice to our eyes.
> (Milgate 107, ll. 55-58)

Bennett ("Donne's _Letters to Severall Persons_" 122-23) links this letter with other Donne letters to Goodyer in which Donne gives Goodyer religious advice and support in the face of attempts to convert him by both Puritans and Catholics, but especially by Sir Tobie Mathew. (Mathew converted to Catholicism in 1606 in Florence and returned to England, where he was eventually imprisoned in the Fleet until 1608. Mathew attempted to convert Goodyer and others.) In this letter Donne is responding to a letter from Goodyer which includes the news that he (Goodyer) has received anonymous letters and a book sent by someone who wishes to convert him to Catholicism. (Donne states that "now the over-obedient Papists attempt you.") As Bennett ("Donne's _Letters to Severall Persons_" 123, n. 15) indicates, this letter follows _Letters_ No. 17. Bennett gives no reason for this assertion, but he must be right because No. 17 contains a lengthy discussion of "alacrity," and No. 34 reminds Goodyer that "as I said last time labour to keep your alacrity and dignity, in an even temper."

The other Donne letters which also give Goodyer religious advice are _Letters_ Nos. 17, 18, 25 and 27. Bennett also includes Nos. 6, 11, 45, 43, and 37 (122-23); the latter group of letters Bennett believes was written to Goodyer although they were not addressed to him in the *Letters*.

68

To Sir H. R. [Henry Goodyer]

IF a whole year be but *Annus ab Annulo*, because it returnes into it self, what *Annululus* shall be diminutive enough, to express our weekly revolutions? In chaines the least linkes have most curiosity, but that can be no emblem of us: but they have also the most strength, and that may. The first sphere onely which is resisted by nothing, absolves his course every day; and so doth true friendship well placed, often iterate in act or purpose, the same offices. But as the lower spheres, subject to the violence of that, and yet naturally encouraged to a reluctation against it, have therefore many distractions, and eccentricities, and some trepidations, and so return but lamely, and lately to the same place, and office: so that friendship which is not moved primarily by the proper intelligence, discretion, and about the naturall center, vertue, doth perchance sometimes, some things, somewhat like true friendship; but hath many deviations, which are strayings into new loves, (not of other men; for that is proper to true wise friendship, which is not a marring; but of other things) and hath such trepidations as keep it from shewing it self, where great persons do not love; and it returns to the true first station and place of friendship planetarily, which is uncertainly and seldome. I have ever seen in *London* and our Court, as some colours, and habits, and continuances, and motions, and phrases, and accents, and songs, so friends in fashion and in season: and I have seen them as sodainly abandoned altogether, though I see no change in them, nor know more why they were left, then why they were chosen. To do things by example, and upon confidence of anothers judgment may be some kinde of a second wisdome;

but it is but writing by a copy: or indeed it is the hardest of all, and the issue of the first wisdome, for I cannot know that this example should be followed, except I knew that it is good, and so I judge my Judge. Our assent therefore, and arrest, must be upon things, not persons. And when we are sure we are in the right way, for great persons, we may be glad of their company, if they go our way; we may for them change our place, but not our end, nor our way, if there be but one, us in Religion: In persevering in it, it concerns as much what our companions be, but very much what our friends. In which I know I speak not dangerously nor mis-appliably to you, as though I averted you from any of those friends, who are of other impressions then you or I in some great circumstances of Religion. You know I never fettered nor imprisoned the word Religion; not straightning it Frierly, *ad Religiones factitias*, (as the *Romans* call well their orders of Religion) nor immuring it in a *Rome*, or a *Wittemberg*, or a *Geneva*; they are all virtuall beams of one Sun, and wheresoever they finde clay hearts, they harden them, and moulder them into dust; and they entender and mollifie waxen. They are not so contrary as the North and South Poles; and that they are connaturall pieces of one circle. Religion is Christianity, which being too spirituall to be seen by us, doth therefore take an apparent body of good life and works, so salvation requires an honest Christian. These are the two Elements, and he which elemented from these, hath the complexion of a good man, and a fit friend. The diseases are, too much intention into indiscreet zeal, and too much remissnesse and negligence by giving scandall: for our condition and state in this, is as infirm as in our bodies; where physitians consider only two degrees; sicknesse, and neutrality; for there is no health in us. This, Sir, I use to say to you, rather to have so good a witnesse and corrector of my meditations, then to advise; and yet to do that too, since it is pardonable in a friend: Not to slack you towards those friends which are religious in other clothes then we; (for *Amici vitia si feras facis tua*, is true of such faults), but to keep you awake against such as the place where you must live will often obtrude, which are not onely naked, without any fashion of such garments, but have neither the body of Religion, which is morall honesty, and sociable faithfulness, nor the soul, Christianity. I know not how this paper scaped last week which I send now; I was so sure that I enwrapped it then, that I should be so still, but that I had but one copy; forgive it as you use to do. From *Micham* in as much haste, and with as ill Pen and Inke, as the letter can accuse me of; but with the last and the next weeks heart and affection.

Yours very truely and affectionately
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 11 (26-31)

Also in Gosse (I: 225)

Textual Notes

l. 53 us: is (compositor error)

Notes

To Sir H. R.: This letter was written to Sir Henry Goodyer.

l. 1 *Annus ab Annulo*: a year from a ring

ll. 2-3 *Annululus*: small ring

l. 5 curiosity

l. 7 the first sphere

l. 53 us] is: compositor error

l. 63 *ad Religiones factitias*: *factities* (late Medieval Latin)

facticias: towards factitious religions

l. 65 Rome] Roman Catholicism

l. 66 Wittemberg] Wittenburg: Lutheranism Geneva] Calvinism

l. 93 Amici vitia si feras facis tua: If you take on the faults of a friend, you make them yours.

Commentary

Donne's New Year's reflections suggest that the letter was written in March; his concern about Goodyer's religion suggests the year 1609. In this letter, Donne tells Goodyer that true friendship is primarily based on "virtue" and "discretion." He further warns Goodyer that friends who deviate from these qualities are erratic and implies that they are not to be trusted. He advises Goodyer not to accept someone else's judgement but to rely on "things" (i.e., ideas, principles) rather than on people and that these "things" are found in religion. For this reason Donne warns Goodyer to be especially careful with friends who are of other religious beliefs. Donne warns Goodyer, not because he believes that only one religion is correct, but because all good Christians must be composed of the two elements of honesty and a good life (good works). The faults to look out for are "indiscreet zeal" and "too much remisnesse and negligence by giving scandall." The entire letter, although moderate in tone and mentioning no names, appears to be aimed at Sir Tobie Mathew and his attempt to convert Goodyer. Implied throughout the letter is the view that a good Christian of one faith would respect the religion of a good Christian of another, something that Mathew did not do. Mathew was full of "indiscreet zeal" in advertising his conversion on his return to London and in trying to convert Goodyer and others and enjoyed the notoriety he gained as the son of the Archbishop of York, who converted to Catholicism and was consequently imprisoned in the Fleet. This letter, then, must be one of a number of letters that Donne wrote to

Goodyer in 1609 when Donne was concerned about Goodyer's religion. Donne never condemned Mathew for his conversion, and appears to have some sympathy for those Christians afflicted with the "diseases of the spirit."

69

To his honourable friend S^{r} H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

> SIR,
>
> TO you that are not easily scandalized, and in whom, I hope, neither my Religion nor Morality can suffer, I dare write my opinion of that Book in whose bowels you left me. It hath refreshed, and given new justice to my ordinary complaint, That the Divines of these times, are become meer Advocates, as though Religion were a temporall inheritance; they plead for it with all sophistications, and illusions, and forgeries: And herein are they likest Advocates, that though they be feed by the way, with Dignities, and other recompenses, yet that for which they plead is none of theirs. They write for Religion, without it. In the main point in question, I think truly there is a perplexity (as farre as I see yet) and both sides may be in justice, and innocence; and the wounds which they inflict upon the adverse part, are all *se defendendo*: for, clearly, our State cannot be safe without the Oath; since they professe, that Clergie-men, though Traitors, are no Subjects, and that all the rest may be none to morrow. And, as clearly, the Supremacy which the Ro. Church pretend, were diminished, if it were limited; and will as ill abide that, or disputation, as the Prerogative of temporall Kings, who being the onely judges of their prerogative, why may not Roman Bishops, (so enlightned as they are presumed by them) be good witnesses of their own supremacie, which is now so much impugned? But for this particular Author, I looked for more prudence, and humane wisdome in him, in avoiding

all miscitings, or mis-interpretings, because at this time, the watch is set, and every bodies hammer is upon that anvill; and to dare offend in that kinde now, is, for a theef to leave the covert, and meet a strong hue and cry in the teeth: and yet truly this man is extremely obnoxious in that kinde; for, though he have answered many things fully, (as no book ever gave more advantage then that which he undertook) and abound in delicate applications, and ornaments, from the divine and prophane authors, yet being chiefly conversant about two points, he prevaricates in both. For, for the matter, which is the first, he referres it intirely, and namely, to that which D. Morton hath said therein before, and so leaves it roundly: And for the person (which is the second) upon whom he amasses as many opprobries, as any other could deserve, he pronounceth, that he will account any answer from his adversary, slaunder, except he do (as he hath done) draw whatsoever he saith of him, from Authors of the same Religion, and in print: And so, he having made use of all the Quodlibetaries, imputations against the other, cannot be obnoxious himself in that kinde, and so hath provided safely. It were no service to you, to send you my notes upon the Book, because they are sandy, and incoherent ragges, for my memory, not for your judgement; and to extend them to an easinesse, and perspicuity; would make them a Pamphlet, not a Letter. I will therefore deferre them till I see you; and in the mean time, I will adventure to say to you, without inserting one unnecessary word, that the Book is full of falsifications in words, and in sense, and of falshoods in matter of fact, and of inconsequent and unscholarlike arguings, and of relinquishing the King, in many points of defence, and of contradiction of himself, and of dangerous and suspected Doctrine in Divinitie, and of silly ridiculous triflings, and of extreme flatteries, and of neglecting better and more obvious answers, and of letting slip some enormous advantages which the other gave, and he spies not. I know (as I begun) I speak to you who cannot be scandalized, and that neither measure Religion (as it is now called) by Unitie, nor suspect Unity, for these interruptions. Sir, not onely a Mathematique point, which is the most indivisible and unique thing which art can present, flowes into every line which is derived from the Center, but our soul which is but one, hath swallowed up a Negative, and feeling soul; which was in the body before it came, and exercises those faculties yet; and God himselfe, who only is one, seems to have been eternally delighted, with a disunion of persons. They whose active function it is, must endevour this unity in Religion: and and we at our lay Altars (which are our tables, or bedside, or stools, wheresoever we dare prostrate our selves to God in prayer) must beg it of him: but we must take heed of making misconclusions upon the want of it: for, whether the Maior and Aldermen fall out, (as with us and the Puritans; Bishops against Priests) or the Commoners voyces differ who is Maior, and who Aldermen, or what their Jurisdiction, (as with the Bishop of *Rome*, or whosoever) yet it is still one Corporation.

Micham, Thurs- *Your very affectionate servant and*
day *late*. *lover* J. Donne.

Never leave the remembrance of my poor service unmentioned when you see the good Lady.

Source: *Letters* No. 52 (160-64)

Also in Gosse (I: 221-23)

Notes

ll. 21-22 *se defendendo*: to defend themselves

l. 52 D. Morton: Dr. Thomas Morton, Dean of Glocester, a friend of Donne's and one of England's best Anglican controversialists

l. 62 Quodlibetaries: from L. *quodlibet*, *quod* what + *libet* it pleases: any question in philosophy or theology proposed as an exercise in disputation (*O.E.D.*)

Commentary

The unnamed author, another indication of Donne's discretion in his letters, was William Barlow, recently appointed Bishop of Lincoln; his book, entitled Answer to a Catholike Englishman, was entered in the Stationer's register on 14 April 1609 and printed shortly after (Bald, Life 216). Barlow's book was intended to support the Oath of Allegiance which King James instituted after the gunpowder plot and which required Catholics to acknowledge James as their lawful sovereign and to deny the Pope had any power to depose him (Bald, Life 212). The date of the appearance of Barlow's book dates this letter. Barlow's incompetence was shown by the response of the Jesuits (especially Persons, Fitzherbert, and Coffin) and contributed to Donne's decision to write a better defense for James's Oath of Allegiance. The result was Pseudo Martyr, printed in 1610.

70

To the honourable Knight S^r^ Henry Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,
AS you are a great part of my business, when I come to London, so are you when I send. More then the office of a visitation brings this Letter to you now; for I remember that about this time you purposed a journey to fetch, or meet the Lad. Huntington. If you justly doubt any long absence, I pray send to my lodging my written Books: and if you may stay very long, I pray send that Letter in which I sent you certain heads which I purposed to enlarge, for I have them not in any other paper: and I may finde time in your absence to do it, because I know no stronger argument to move you to love me, but because you

have done so, doe so still, to make my reason better, and I shall at last prescribe in you

Yours,
J. Donne.

Micham Wednesday.

Source: Letters No. 80 (225)

Also in Gosse (I: 224)

Notes

Goodere:	Goodyer
Lady Huntington:	the Countess of Huntington, Elizabeth Stanley, the youngest daughter of the Countess of Derby. She became Sir Thomas Egerton's stepdaughter when he married her mother, the Countess of Derby, in 1600; thus Donne knew her before Goodyer began to attach himself to her household (Bald, Life 110). Her husband, Lord Henry Hastings, the 5th Earl of Huntington, was a cousin of the Countess of Bedford.

Commentary

This letter, written when Donne still lived at Mitcham, apparently refers to Donne's sources and outline for Pseudo-Martyr. Hence this letter must follow No. 52 and belong to the same period of time (May-June 1609).

71

To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere.

BEcause things be conserved by the same means, which established them, I nurse that friendship by Letters, which you begot so: though you have since strengthened it by more solid aliment and real offices. In these Letters from the Country there is this merit, that I do otherwise unwillingly turn mine eye or thoughts from my books, companions in whom there is no falshood nor frowardnesse: which words, I am glad to observe that the holy Authours often joyne as expressers and relatives to one another, because else out of a naturall descent to that unworthy fault of frowardnesse, furthered with that incommodity of a little thinne house; I should have mistaken it to be a small thing, which now I see equalled with the worst. If you have laid my papers and books by, I pray let this messenger have them, I have determined upon them. If you have not, be content to do it, in the next three or four days. So, Sir, I kiss your hands; and deliver to you an intire and clear heart; which shall ever when I am with you be in my face and tongue, and when I am from you, in my Letters, for I will never draw Curtain between you and it.

From your house at *Yours very affectionately*
Micham *friday morning*. J. Donne.

When you are sometimes at M. Sackvills, *I pray aske if he have this book,* Baldvinus de officio pii hominis in controversiis; *it was written at the conference at* Poissy, *where* Beza *was, and he answered it; I long for it*.

Source: *Letters* No. 24 (68-69)

Also in Gosse (I: 223)

Textual Notes

M. Sackvills] M. Sackville's (Edward Sackville). See Commentary.

Notes

Baldvinus de officio pii hominis in controversiis]: According to Bald (Life 219n.), Baldvinus (Francois Baudin) was not the author but merely arranged for the printing of the book in Paris at the time of the Colloquy in Poissy. The real author was Georges Cassandre; the correct title, De Officiis pii ac publicae tranquilitatis vere amantis viri in hoc religionis dissidio. The book "was an appeal by a moderate Catholic for compromise and reconciliation with the Protestants."

Beza, Theodore de (Bishop) 1519-1605: John Calvin's chief assistant and successor as leader of Reformed Protestantism.

Commentary

This letter, dated only Friday, undoubtedly follows Letters No. 80 by two days. The latter, dated Wednesday, and this letter both contain Donne's request to Goodyer to return his materials for Pseudo-Martyr. In the postscript Donne hopes to borrow a book from M. Sackvill.

M. Sackville was Edward Sackville, the younger brother of the Earl of Dorset; he succeeded to the title in 1624 (Bald, Life 219). See Bald (218-27) for a discussion of the writing and reception of Pseudo-Martyr.

72

To S^r H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
IT should be no interruption to your pleasures to heare mee often say that I love you, and that you are as much my meditation as my selfe: I often compare not you and mee, but the Spheare in which your

resolutions are, and my wheele; both I hope concentrique to God: for me thinkes the new Astronomie is thus applyable well, that wee which are a little earth should rather move towards God, then that hee which is fulfilling, and can come no whither, should move towards us. To your life full of variety, nothing is old, nor new to mine. And as to that life, all stickings and hesitations seeme stupid and stony, so to this, all fluid slipperinesses and transitory migrations seeme giddy and feathery. In that life one is ever in the porch or posterne, going in or out, never within his house, himself: It is a garment made of remnants, a life raveld out into ends, a line discontinued, & a number of small wretched points; uselesse, because they concurre not: A life built of past & future, not proposing any constant present. They have more pleasures then wee, but not more pleasure: they joy oftner, wee longer; and no man but of so much understanding as may deliver him from being a foole, would change with a mad-man, which had a better proportion of wit in his often _Lucidis_. You know, they which dwell farthest from the Sunne, if in any convenient distance, have longer dayes, better appetites, better digestion, better growth, and longer life. And all these advantages have their mindes who are well removed from the scorchings, and dazlings, and exhalings of the worlds glory; but neither of our lifes are in such extremes; for you living at Court without ambition, which would burne you, or envy which would devest others, live in the Sunne, not in the fire; and I which live in the Country without stupifying, am not in darknesse, but in shadow, which is not no light, but a pallid, watrish, and diluted one. As all shadowes are of one colour if you respect the body from which they are cast (for our shadows upon clay will be dirty, and in a garden greene, and flowery,) so all retyrings into a shadowie life are alike from all causes, and alike subject to the barbarousnesse and insipid dulnes of the countrie: Only the employment, and that upon which you cast and bestow your pleasure, businesse, or bookes, gives it the tincture, and beauty. But truly wheresoever we are, if wee can but tell our selves truly what & where we would be, we may make any state & place such: For we are so composed, that if abundance, or glory scorch & melt us, we have an earthly cave, our bodies to go into by consideration, & coole our selves: and if we be frozen, and contracted with lower and darke fortunes, wee have within us a torch, a soule, lighter and warmer then any without: we are therefore our owne umbrellas, and our owne Suns. These Sir, are the Sallads, and Onyons of Miehin, sent to you with as wholsome affection as your other friends send Melons and Quelque choses from Court

> and London. If I present you not as good dyet as they, I would yet say grace to theirs, and bid much good do it you. I send you, with this, a letter which I sent to the Countesse. It is not my use nor duty to do so. But for your having of it, there were but two consents, and I am sure you have mine, and you are sure you have hers: I also writ to her Ladiship for the verses shee shewed in the garden, which I did not onely to extort them, nor onely to keepe my promise of writing, for that I had done in the other letter, and perchance shee hath forgotten the promise, nor onely because I thinke my letters just good enough for a Progresse, but because I would write apace to her, whilst it is possible to expresse that which I yet know of her, for by this growth I see how soone she will be ineffable.

Source: *Poems* 1633 (364-66)

Also in Gosse (I: 218-20)

Collation

Poems: 1633, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

Letters: 1651, 54

Title: *To S^{r}* H.G. 1633 pp. 364-66
Letters 1651, 54 pp. 61-64

To Sir H.G. 1639 pp. 293-95
1649-54 pp. 282-84
1669 pp. 279-81

To Sir H.G. 1719 pp. 247-49

SIR] *SIR* 1719

1. 1 be] bee 1635 pleasures] pleasures, 1651, 54

1. 2 heare] hear 1669 1651, 54 1719 mee] me 1649-1719 1651, 54
say] say, 1719

1. 3 meditation] meditations 1651, 54
selfe] self 1649-1719 1651, 54

1. 4 mee] me 1635-1719 1651, 54 Spheare] Sphere 1649-54
sphear 1669 Sphear, 1719

1. 5 wheele] wheel 1649-1719 1651, 54 hope] hope, 1719

l. 6 me thinkes] me thinks 1649-69 1651, 54 methinks 1719
Astronomie] Astronomy 1635-1719

l. 7 applyable] appliable 1635-1719 1651, 54
well,] well; 1635-1719 wee] we 1635-1719 1651, 54
earth] earth, 1651, 54 1719

l. 8 then] than 1669 1719 hee] he 1669 1651, 54 he, 1719

l. 10 life] life, 1719 variety] varietie 1635, 39

l. 11 mine.] mine; 1651, 54 And] and 1651, 54

l. 12 seeme] seem 1649-1719 1651, 54 stony,] stony; 1719

l. 13 slipperinesses] slipperinesses, 1651, 54

l. 14 seeme] seem 1649-1719 1651, 54 giddy] giddie 1651, 54
feathery] featherie 1651, 54

l. 15 posterne] postern 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 16 house,] house 1651, 54 1719

l. 17 raveld] ravel'd 1719 &] and 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 18 points;] points, 1651, 54 1719
uselesse] useless 1649-54 1719

l. 19 concurre] concurr 1669 1719 A] a 1669 1719
&] and 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 20 present. They] present, they 1649-69 1651, 54

l. 21 then] than 1639 1719 wee] we 1649-1719 1651, 54
not] no 1649-54 1719 pleasure:] pleasure; 1651, 54 1719
wee] we 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 22 understanding] understanding, 1719

l. 23 foole] fool 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 24 mad-man] mad man 1669 madman 1719

l. 26 they] they, 1719 Sunne] Sun 1651, 54 1719

l. 27 dayes] days 1649-54 1719 daies 1651, 54 1669

l. 28 life.] life: 1651, 54 1719

l. 29 advantages] advantages, 1639-69 And] and 1719
mindes] minds 1719

l. 30 dazlings,] dazlings 1635-69

l. 31 worlds] world's 1719 glory; but] glory. But 1719
glory: but 1651, 54 lifes] lives 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 32 extremes] extreams 1635-1719

l. 33 burne] burn 1649-1719 1651, 54 envy] envy, 1719

l. 34 devest] divest 1719 Sunne] Sun 1635-1719 1651, 54
fire] Fire 1651, 54 1719

l. 35 and] And 1651, 54 I] I, 1719 stupifying] stupyfying 1669
stupefying 1651, 54

l. 36 am] and 1719 darknesse] darkness 1669 1719
not no light] no light 1635-1719

l. 37 watrish,] watrish 1635, 39 waterish 1649-1719
waterish, 1651, 54

l. 38 shadowes] shadows 1669 1719 1651, 54
colour] colour, 1651, 54 1719

l. 39 shadows] shadowes 1635, 39

l. 40 dirty] dirtie 1635 garden] garden, 1635-69
greene,] greene 1635-69 green 1719 green, 1651, 54
flowery,] flowery; 1719
retyrings] retirings 1649-1719 1651, 54

l. 41 shadowie] shadowy 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 42 alike subject to] alike to 1635-69
barbarousnesse] barbarousness 1649-1719
dulnes] dulnesse 1635-54 1651, 54 dulness 1669 1719

l. 43 countrie] country 1649-1719 Country 1651, 54
Only] Onely 1635-54 onely 1651, 54
employment] impoloyment 1635-69 emploiments 1651, 54
that] that, 1719

l. 44 businesse,] businesse 1635-54 business 1669 1719

l. 45 bookes] books 1649-1719 1651, 54 gives] give 1719
tincture, and] tincture or 1635-1719

l. 46 if wee] if we 1635-1719 1651, 54 truly] truly, 1719

l. 47 &] and 1635-1719 1651, 54 we] wee 1635, 39
we] wee 1635, 39 &] and 1635-1719 1651, 54

l. 48 such: For] such; for 1651, 54 abundance,] abundance 1719

1. 49 &] and 1635-1719 1651, 54 we] wee 1639

1. 50 bodies] bodies, 1649-1719 1651, 54 go] goe 1635-54
&] and 1635-1719 1651, 54 coole] cool 1651, 54

1. 51 we] wee 1639 be] bee 1639

1. 52 darke] dark 1649-1719 1651, 54 wee] we 1635-1719 1651, 54
soule] soul

1. 53 then] than 1635, 39, 69 we] wee 1635, 39

1. 54 owne] own 1669 1651, 54 1719
umbrellas] umbrella's 1649-69 1651, 54 Umbrella's 1719
owne] own 1669 1651, 54 1719 Suns] Sunnes 1633-54 1651, 54
These] These, 1651, 54 1719

1. 55 Sallads,] sallads 1651, 54 Onyons] onions 1651, 54
Onions 1719 Miehin] Michin 1635-69 Micham 1651, 54
Mitcham 1719

1. 56 with as] as 1719 wholsome] wholesome 1635 wholesom 1669
affection] affection,

1. 57 Quelque choses] Quelque-choses 1651, 54 quelque-choses 1719

1. 58 London] London 1651, 54 1719 dyet] diet 1651, 54 1719

1. 60 do] doe 1635-54 you,] you 1719 this,] this 1719
letter] Letter 1651, 54 letter, 1719

1. 61 Countesse] Countess 1669 1719

1. 62 do] doe 1635-54 1651, 54 so. But] so, but 1651, 54
so: But 1719 it,] it 1719

1. 64 hers:] hers. 1635-1719 1651, 54 Ladiship] La^{p} 1651, 54
Ladyship 1719

1. 65 shee] she 1635-1719 1651, 54 did] did, 1719

1. 66 onely] only 1669 1719 extort] eztort 1639
onely] only 1719 keepe] keep 1649-1719 1651, 54

1. 67 for] (for 1719 letter] Letter 1651, 54

1. 68 shee] she 1649-1719 1651, 54 promise,] promise; 1651, 54
promise) 1719

1. 69 onely] only 1669 1719 thinke] think 1749-1719 1651, 54
letters] Letters 1651, 54

l. 70 Progresse] Progress 1669 progresse 1651, 54
Progress; 1719

l. 71 whilst] whilest 1651, 54 expresse] express 1669 1719
that] that, 1719

l. 72 her,] her; 1719 see] see, 1719

l. 73 soone] soon 1649-1719 1651, 54 be] bee 1635

Notes

l. 25 Lucidis: periods of temporary sanity occurring between attacks of lunacy

l. 34 devest: unclothe

l. 45 tincture: color

Commentary

Gosse (I: 220) dates this letter 1609 without specifically commenting on his reasons. In it Donne contrasts his quiet life in the country where he was without employment with Goodyer's life at court. The metaphorical use of the "salads and onyons" of Mitcham and Donne's reference to reading verses in the garden with the Countess of Bedford suggest that Gosse is correct, and that the letter was written during the summer of that year. In Letters No. 39 (dated 14 August 1609) Donne refers to receiving a letter from the Countess of Bedford and sending her a verse letter. In 1605 Goodyer had become one of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber but, as Milgate (235) says, "his decaying fortunes needed a better place." Hence, both Goodyer and Donne had need of the equanimity Donne describes here. Merrill (282) dates the letter 1609 or 1610 "because the letter was written after Sir Henry Goodyer had entered the service of the Earl of Bedford and before Donne had left Mitcham for

Drury House." Merrill's first contention is inconclusive, however. Sir Henry Goodyer had long been friendly with the Countess of Bedford's family. His uncle, the elder Sir Henry Goodyer, from whom Donne's friend inherited his title, was a close friend of Sir John Harrington, the Countess of Bedford's father. Sir John Harrington was one of the overseers of the elder Goodyer's will made in favor of Donne's friend. Donne first mentions the Countess in a letter to Goodyer dated 23 February 1601/2. Bald suggests that a close relationship did not develop between the Countess of Bedford and Donne until 1607, after the Countess leased Twicknam Park, which was near Mitcham. Bald (Life 176-77) quotes from this letter as an example of Donne's feelings for the Countess during the latter part of 1608. Donne clearly refers to living at Mitcham in the letter; hence it was written before 1611 when Donne and his family left there. Merrill, however, has one further piece of evidence to support his dating of the letter. The letter contains a reference to "the new astronomie"; Kepler announced his discovery of some of the laws of planetary motion in 1609.

Comparing life in the city and the country was a common Renaissance topos which the English derived from the Greek Anthology. Donne had earlier dealt with the topic in an exchange of verse letters with Sir Henry Wotton. (See Milgate 225-26 for a discussion of the circumstances surrounding the verse letter.) This prose letter, as Milgate (227, 230) points out, contains some echoes of the verse letter: in both, the court is too near the sun, while the country is dark and frozen, and in both Donne deplores the "Countries dulnesse." Nevertheless, there is a marked difference between the verse letter, which is largely impersonal and satirical, and the prose letter, which is much more personal and realistic and more appropriate for the positions in which both Donne and Goodyer found themselves in 1609.

73

To the Countesse of Bedford.

Happiest and worthyest Lady,

I Do not remember that ever I have seen a petition in verse, I would not therefore be singular, nor adde these to your other papers. I have yet adventured so neare asto make a petition for verse, It is for those your Ladiship did me the honor to see in a *Twicknam* garden, except you repent your making & having mended your judgement by thinking worse, that is, better, because juster, of their subject. They must needs be an excellent exercise of your wit, which speake so well of so ill. I humbly begge them of your Ladiship, with two such promises, as to any other of your compositions were threatnings: That I will not shew them, & that I will not beleeve them; And nothing should be so used which comes from your braine or heart. If I should confesse a fault in the boldnesse of asking them, or make a fault by doing it in a longer letter, your Ladiship might use your stile and old fashion of the Court towards mee, and pay mee with a pardon. Here therefore I humbly kisse your Ladiships faire learned hands, and wish you good wishes and speedy grants.

Your Ladiships servant
JO. DONNE.

Source: *Poems* 1633 (367)

Collation

Title	*To the Countesse of* Bedford.	1633 p. 367 *Letters* 1651, 54 pp. 67-68
	To the Countesse of Bedford.	1649, 50, 54 p. 285
	To the Countess of Bedford.	1669 p. 281
	To the Countess of BEDFORD.	1719 p. 250

Happiest and worthyest Lady,] *worthiest* 1635, 39 *Letters* 1719

Happiest and worthyest Lady, 1649-69

l. 1 Do] Doe 1635, 39 remember] remember, 1719

l. 2 adde] add 1635-54 1719

l. 4 neare] near 1649-1719 petitio*n*] petition 1635-1719 *Letters*
It] it 1635-1719 those] those, 1719

l. 5 Ladiship] Ladyship 1719 mee] me 1635, 39 1719
honor] honour 1635-1719 *Letters*
in a Twicknam] in a Twickinam 1635, 39 in Twicknam 1649-69
in *Twicknam* *Letters* 1719

l. 6 garden,] garden; 1719 repe*n*t] repent 1635-1719 *Letters*
making] making, *Letters* &] and 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 7 judgement] judgment 1635, 1649-1719

l. 8 juster,] juster 1719

l. 9 speake] speak 1649-1719

l. 10 ill.] ill: *Letters* begge] beg 1635-1719 *Letters*
Ladiship] Ladyship 1719

l. 11 your] yours 1649-54

l. 12 threatnings:] threatnings, 1719 That] that *Letters*
&] and 1635-1719 *Letters*

l. 13 beleeve] believe 1669 1719 And] and *Letters*

l. 14 used] used, 1719 which] that *Letters*
braine] brain 1669 1719 heart] breast *Letters*

l. 15 confesse] confess 1719 boldnesse] boldness 1669 1719

l. 16 by doing] in doing 1719 letter] Letter *Letters*

l. 17 Ladiship] Ladyship 1719 stile] style *Letters*

l. 18 mee,] mee 1639 me, 1649-1719 *Letters*
mee] me 1649-1719 *Letters* pardon] Pardon *Letters*

l. 19 kisse] kiss 1669, 1719 Ladiships] Ladyship's 1719
faire] fair 1649-1719 *Letters*

l. 22 *Ladiships servant*] *Ladiships servant*, 1635-69
Ladiship's servant, 1719
JO. DONNE.] IOHN DONNE. 1639 JOHN DONNE. 1649-54
JOHN DONNE. 1669 1719 J. DONNE *Letters*

Commentary

Gosse (218) suggests that the verse letter referred to is "Reason is our soul's left hand," probably Donne's first verse letter to the Countess of Bedford. Bald (Life 175 n. 1) points out, however, that this letter was sent with letter No. 21 to Sir Henry Goodyer, and suggests that Donne is referring to the verse letter 'Madam, You have refin'd mee,' when he tells Goodyer of the verses that he has sent to the Countess of Bedford. The verse letter, like the prose letter, contains a reference to Donne's writing petitions to the Countess. This prose letter, like No. 21 and like the verse letter 'Madam, You have refin'd mee,' shows signs of belonging to the early period of Donne's friendship with the Countess of Bedford.

74

To my most worthy friend Sir Henry Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,

BEcause evennesse conduces as much to strength and firmnesse as greatnesse doth, I would not discontinue my course of writing. It is a sacrifice, which though friends need not, friendship doth; which hath in it so much divinity, that as we must be ever equally disposed inwardly so to doe or suffer for it, so we must sepose some certain times for the outward service thereof, though it be but formall and testimoniall: that time to me towards you is Tuesday, and my Temple, the Rose in Smith-field. If I were by your appointment your Referendarie for news, I should write but short Letters, because the times are barren. The low Countries, which used to be the Mart of news for this season, suffering also, or rather enjoying a vacation. Since therefore I am but mine own Secretary (and what's

> that?) I were excusable if I writ nothing,
> since I am so: Besides that, your much
> knowledge brings you this disadvantage,
> that as stomachs accustomed to delicacies,
> finde nothing new or pleasing to
> them when they are sick; so you can hear
> nothing from me (though the Countrey
> perchance make you hungry) which you
> know not. Therefore in stead of a Letter to
> you, I send you one to another, to the best
> Lady, who did me the honour to acknow-
> ledge the receit of one of mine, by one of
> hers; and who only hath power to cast
> the fetters of verse upon my free meditati-
> ons: It should give you some delight, and
> some comfort, because you are the first
> which see it, and it is the last which you
> shall see of this kinde from me.
> Micham the Your very affectionate lover and servant
> 14 August. J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 39 (116-17)

Also in Gosse (I: 216)

Notes

l. 12 the Rose in Smith-field: Donne is writing from an inn; it becomes his temple because he is performing one of the rites of friendship in it (writing letters), and friendship for Donne is a second religion.

closing Micham: Mitcham

Commentary

The reference to the vacation in the Low Countries dates this letter 1609. The "vacation" was from war after the truce of Bergen was signed on 9 April 1609 between the United Provinces and Philip III of Spain. It lasted for twelve 12 years (Gosse I: 217).

The reference to the enclosed letter "to the best Lady, who did me the honour to acknowledge the receit of one of mine [letters], by one of hers" and "who only hath power to cast the fetters of verse upon my free meditations" is to the Countess of Bedford. Milgate (261) believes that Donne is here referring to a prose letter. Donne, however, may be referring to an exchange of verse letters, perhaps alluding to his verse letter to the Countess of Bedford, "T'have written thee," which contains a reference to the deaths of the Countess of Bedford's friends Lady Markham and Mistress Bulstrode and hence may well have been written between August 4 (the date of Mistress Bulstrode's death) and August 14 (the date of this letter). Unless Donne is being uncharacteristically careless in his juxtaposition of two different things, i.e., letters and poems to the Countess of Bedford, he must be referring to a verse letter. In the unlikely event that he was simply being careless, he might have been referring to his elegy on Cecilia Bulstrode and the reply "Death be not proud" attributed by Grierson (cxliv) to the Countess of Bedford herself (see Commentary to Letter No. 49).

1610

75

[To Sir Robert Cotton]

Sr
I ame gone to Roysham, and I make account
that hys mtie may receiue the booke thys
eueninge so that y^{w} may at yo^{r} first ley-
sure deliuer thys Booke to my L: to who I bee
seech y^{ow} to recommend me [--st] humble ser-
vices.

y^{rs} Euer to be
commanded
24 Jan: J: DONNE

Source: Br. Lib. Cotton MS Julius C.III, f. 154 (Beal No. 11)

Other transcriptions: None

Facsimile in Gosse (I: facing 108)

Commentary

This letter accompanied a copy of Donne's *Pseudo-Martyr* which Cotton was asked to deliver "to my L[ord]" who according to Bald (*Life* 221, n. 3) is "almost certainly" the Earl of Northampton. The book was entered in the Stationer's Register on December 2, 1609, and a copy was taken by Donne to present to the king on 24 January 1610 at Royston where the king was hunting. *Pseudo-Martyr* defends the Oath of Allegiance instituted after the gunpowder plot in 1605 for all English Catholics and answers Catholic objections to the oath.

76

[To Sir Thomas Egerton]

As Ryvers, though in there Course they are content to serue publique uses, yett there end ys, to returne into the Sea, from whence they issued. So, though I should haue much Comfort, that thys Booke might giue contentment to others, yet my Direct end in ytt was, to make yt a testimony of my gratitude towards yo^{r} Lp and an acknowledgement, that those poore sparks of Vnderstandinge or Judgement w^{ch} are in mee, were deriued and kindled from yo^{w}, and owe themselues to yo^{w}. All good that ys in ytt, yo^{r} Lp may be pleasd to accept as yo^{rs}; and for the Errors, I cannot despayr of yo^{r} pardon, since yo^{w} haue longe since pardond greater faults in mee.

yo^{r} Lps
humble and fayth=
full Seruant

J: DONNE

Source: Facsimile in Sotheby's Sale Catalogue 19 March 1951, Lot 109

MS owned by Robert S. Pirie (Beal No. 13)

This letter is partly printed in Grierson (II: 204).

Transcription Notes

A copy of the original holograph, owned by R. S. Pirie, was not available for transcribing. The holograph was affixed to a blank leaf at the end of the presentation copy.

Commentary

This letter accompanied a copy of Donne's book *Pseudo-Martyr* sent by Donne to his former patron, Sir Thomas Egerton. The greater faults mentioned by Donne in this letter probably refer to his secret marriage to Anne More (see Letters 1 to 9). This letter suggests that Donne and Egerton remained friendly despite Donne's dismissal. The image of Donne as the river and Egerton as the sea which is both the source and the end of the river was also used by Donne in a verse letter to the Countess of Bedford ("You that are she and you") written in 1609. Milgate (260) suggests that this verse letter was likely a covering letter accompanying a funeral elegy on Lady Markham, Lady Bedford's first cousin, who died at Twickenham on 4 May 1609, because the verse letter contains an allusion to Judith who, like Lady Markham, was a widow (see Letter No. 49). In both prose and verse, Donne uses the sea image in the same way: to flatter a patron gracefully.

77

Most gracious Prince [To the Prince of Wales]

Next to that boldnes of hauinge dedicated thys Booke to our Soueraigne L: yo^{r} Highnes father, It were the greatest boldnes that I could committ not to present to yo^{r} Highnes a Copy therof, who are so perfitt a Copy of Hym. For though thys Booke be none of those things which deuolue upon yo^{w} because they are Hys (for by so great a Title as that, onely kingdomes and vertues belonge to yo^{w}) yett ytt belongs to yo^{r} Highnes because ytt endeuors to prepare and dispose some irresolud and undetermind persons to an obedience of o^{r} Lawes, and so yt respects and relates to future tymes w^{ch} are yo^{rs}. Though therfore some extreme contemplatiue philosophers haue thought ytt to be the highest Degree of Reverence w^{ch} man could [w] use towards God to abstaine from owtward sacrifices, and from Verball prayer, beecause nothinge but o^{r} purest thoughts, before they are mingled w^{t} any Affections or passions, can haue any proportion to God, or gett w^{t}in any distance of hym, yett they errd, because they thought we went to God in these Actions, when indeed God comes to us. So also do princes descend to [receive] the offices of such men as cannot reach up to them. for therfore hath God allowed them so many of hys own Attributes, that they might not take a measure of theyr greatnes, by the lownes of others, but by theyr conforminge themselues to hym, and doinge as he doth. And therfore though I might haue performd some part of my Duty by continuinge in my priuate prayers in my study for yo^{r} Highnes, and thys state, yett I cannot fear, but that yo^{w} wyll also descend to thys, and accept the same Duty, as yt ys thus uttered and apparelled in thys Booke. for, since as well as the whole Body of thys state I ~~enioy~~ also felt the benefitt and sweetnes w^{ch} we enioy in thys ~~flo~~--- gouernment, ytt became mee to contribute some thinge in testimony of my thankfullnes, and onely in wishinge yo^{r} Highnes happines and in thys manner of expressinge ytt, ame I a Subsidy man.

yo^{r} Highnes
most humble and most
Devoted Seruant
John Donne

Source: MS: Portland Papers, Vol. I, f. 211 (Beal No. 12)

Other transcriptions: Hayward (XV: 462-63)

Notes

subsidy:	pecuniary aid exacted by a prince, lord, etc. (*O.E.D.*, 1450)
God descends to us:	Donne also often expresses the idea that God descends to us through the example of great men and women. The Countess of Bedford and the Countess of Salisbury, like Prince Henry, are God's representatives and examples for lesser mortals to follow.

Commentary

The copy of the book Donne refers to is *Pseudo-Martyr*, dedicated by Donne to James I and referred to by Donne in his letter of 24 January 1610 to Sir Robert Cotton. See the commentary on that letter about the book. Prince Henry was invested as Prince of Wales on 4 June 1610 (Akrigg 127). This meant that Prince Henry was recognized as having come of age, and his household was enlarged and modelled on that of the King.

Donne's friend George Garrard was in the service of Prince Henry; another friend, Sir Edward Phelips, was Chancellor of Prince Henry's new household. Bald (Life 286) suggests that Donne was one of the "worthy" gentlemen to whom Thomas Coryate refers in a letter from India who favored "vertue, and the sacred Muses." The group apparently included Sir Edward Phelips. In 1614 Donne accepted a seat in Parliament from Phelips. Sir George More, Donne's father-in-law, was Receiver-General of Prince Henry's household (Akrigg 132). At this time Donne's future must have looked promising to him, but Prince Henry's death changed the prospects of everyone who had been in his service.

78

To the worthiest Lady M^{rs}. Bridget White.

MADAME,
I Could make some guesse whe-
ther souls that go to heaven,
retain any memory of us
that stay behinde, if I knew
whether you ever thought of
us, since you enjoyed your heaven, which
is your self, at home. Your going away hath
made London a dead carkasse. A Tearm, and
a Court do a little spice and embalme it,
and keep it from putrefaction, but the soul
went away in you: and I think the onely
reason why the plague is somewhat slack-
ned, is, because the place is dead already,
and no body left worth the killing. Where-
soever you are, there is London enough: and
it is a diminishing of you to say so, since
you are more then the rest of the world.
When you have a desire to work a miracle,
you will return hither, and raise the place
from the dead, and the dead that are in it;
of which I am one, but that a hope that I
have a room in your favour keeps me alive;
which you shall abundantly confirme to
me, if by one letter you tell me, that you

have received my six; for now my letters
are grown to that bulk, that I may divide
them like *Amadis* the *Gaules* book, and tell
you, that this is the first letter of the second
part of the first book.
Strand S. Peters
day at nine.   *Your humblest, and affectionate*
June 29   *servant* J. D.

Source: *Letters* No. 1 (1-2)

Also in Gosse (I: 234-35)

Collation

Letters   No. 1 (1-2)

T.M.C.   No. 5 (110)

Letters No. 1   *T.M.C*. No. 5

To the worthiest Lady M^{rs}. Bridget White] *A servant to a Lady, by occasion of her having left* London.

Madame,] Madam,

ll. 1-7 I Could make some guesse whe / ther souls that go to heaven, / retain any memory of us / that stay behinde, if I knew / whether you ever thought of us, since you enjoyed your heaven, which / is your self, at home.] These lines are omitted in *T.M.C*.

l. 8 carkasse.] carcase:

l. 9 Court] Court,   embalme] embalm

l. 10 putrefaction,] putrefaction;   soul] Soul
you: and] you. And

l. 11 think] think,   onely] onelie

l. 12 reason] reason,   plague] Plague

l. 13 place] Place   already] alreadie

l. 14 body] bodie   left worth] left in it worth

l. 15 enough:] enough;

l. 20 and raise] and both raise   place] Place

l. 21 dead that are in it;] dead who are in it;

l. 22 which] which, I am one] I were one hope] hope,

l. 23 room] place favour] favour, alive;] alive:

l. 24 which] Which abundantly] abundantlie confirme] confirm

l. 25 letter] Letter you tell me] you vouchsafe to tell me

l. 26 six; for] six. For letters] Letters

l. 28 *Amadis* the *Gaules* book] *Amadis de Gaules* Bookes

l. 29 letter] Letter

l. 30 part] Part book.] Book, &c.

Strand S. Peters
day at nine] omitted in *T.M.C*.

Your humblest, and affectionate
servant J.D.] omitted in *T.M.C*.

Notes

Amadis the *Gaules* book: a Spanish or Portuguese romance written by Garcia de Montalvo in the second half of the fifteenth century and printed in the early sixteenth century. The book was one of the most popular of chivalric romances, which was a popular genre throughout Europe. *Amadis of Gaule* was one of two romances specially excepted from the holocaust of Don Quixote's books by the curate and the barber because the barber had heard that "it is the best of all the books of this kind ever written. So, as it is unequalled in its accomplishment, it ought to be pardoned" (Cervantes 57).

Commentary

Five letters to Bridget White occupy the "place of honor" at the beginning of the Letters. Bridget White was the daughter of John White of Southwick, Hampshire. According to R. C. Bald (Life 186-87), she spent the spring of 1610 in London, returned home in mid-summer and before the end of the year married Sir Henry Kingsmill, the son and heir of a neighboring squire. Of the five letters to her that are available to us, four were written in 1610; the other one was written in 1624. Two of the letters written in 1610 were written on June 29. One (Letters No. 1, T.M.C. No. 5) is dated S. Peter's Day at nine in the Sir Tobie Mathews Collection; the other, Letters No. 2, was written on the same day at four. Both letters refer to earlier letters that had gone astray. In the first letter Donne tells Bridget White that he has sent three single letters earlier and now includes this letter with two others, making a total of six. The second letter states that Donne has sent six letters and that this is the seventh. Both remarks taken together suggest that the nine o'clock letter is Donne's sixth to Bridget White and that the four o'clock letter is the seventh.

Donne's latter remark suggests that the nine o'clock letter was one of the three letters sent earlier than the four o'clock letter. The nine o'clock letter also contains a reference to Sir Edward Herbert's recent recovery from a fever. Sir Edward Herbert, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was the oldest son of Magdalen Herbert and the brother of George Herbert. Herbert's biographer, Mario M. Rossi, in La vita, le opere, i tempi di Edoardo Herbert di Cherbury, 1947, believes that Herbert left for Juliers in April 1610 and, therefore, he could not be correctly described by Donne in a June 29th letter as having recently recovered from a fever

(Bald, Life 187 n. 2). Moreover, Herbert states in his Autobiography that after his return from Juliers he suffered from a fever that was nearly fatal. These two pieces of evidence lead Rossi to conclude that both letters were written on June 29, 1611, after Herbert's return from Juliers. In response, Bald (Life 187, n. 2) points out that Herbert states the siege (which began on July 17) had already begun when he arrived at Juliers, which could place him in London in June. Bald further points out that a 1609 or 1610 date is more consistent with Donne's reference in the letter to the plague. The third surviving letter to Bridget White was written early in July 1610 but was not sent until November, along with the fourth surviving letter dated November 8, which was primarily written to accompany the third. The July letter can be dated from the postscript, which refers to Bridget White's brother going to Cleves. According to Gosse, "The reference here evidently is to the going of Mistress White's brother in the English force, under Sir Edward Cecil, to act with the Dutch in July 1610, under the general command of Christian of Anhalt" (I: 237). The death of Duke John William of Cleves, on the 25th of March 1609, led to the opening up of various important international questions connected with the Cleves-Juliers success. Bald suggests that Bridget White's brother possibly accompanied Sir Edward Herbert (Life 187, n. 2).

This letter was printed first in the 1651 Letters and fifth in the T.M.C. Not much is known about Donne's relationship with Bridget White. He appears to have met her in 1610; he wrote at least seven letters to her that year, four of which are extant, but their friendship apparently was interrupted. One other Donne letter remains, consoling Bridget White on the death of her husband in 1624. (See Letter No. 197.)

The conceit Donne uses in this letter (that Bridget White's departure has made London a "dead carkasse") is used much more extravagantly in Donne's poem "A Nocturnall" written on the occasion of a serious illness or death of Donne's wife or, perhaps, a serious illness of the Countess of Bedford's. In that poem the whole world is a carcass and the speaker is not simply one of the dead, as he is in this letter, but "every dead thing." Perhaps Donne's most widely known use of a similar idea is in the *Anatomy* "First Anniversarie."

79

To the worthiest Lady Mrs. B. W. [Bridget White].

MADAME,

I Think the letters which I send to you single lose themselves by the way for want of a guide, or faint for want of company. Now, that on your part there be no excuse, after three single letters, I send three together, that every one of them may have two witnesses of their delivery. They come also to waite upon another letter from Sr *E. Herbert*, of whose recovery from a Fever, you may apprehend a perfecter contentment then we, because you had none of the former sorrow. I am an Heretique if it be found Doctrine, that pleasure tasts best after sorrow. For my part, I can love health well enough, though I be never sick; and I never needed my Mistris frowns and disfavours, to make her favours acceptable to me. In States, it is a weakness to stand upon a defensive war, and safer not to be invaded, then to have overcome: so in our souls health, an innocence is better then the heartiest repentance. And in the pleasures of this life, it is better that the variety of the pleasures give us the taste and appetite to it, then a sowre and sad interruption quicken our stomack; for then we live by Physick. I wish therefore all your happinesses such as this intire, and without flaw, or

spot of discontentment; and such is the love
and service of
Strand S. Peters Your humblest and affectionatest
day at 4. servant J. D.

Source: Letters No. 2 (3-4)

Also in Gosse (I: 234-35)

80

To the Honourable Lady Mrs. B. W. [Bridget White]

MADAME,

I Have but small comfort in this letter; the messenger comes too easily to me, and I am too sure that the letter shall be delivered. All adventures towards you should be of more difficulty and hazard. But perchance I need not lament this; it may be so many of my letters are lost already that it is time that one should come, like Jobs servant, to bring word, that the rest were lost. If you have had more before, this comes to aske how they were received; and if you have had none, it comes to try how they should have been received. It comes to you like a bashfull servant, who though he have an extreme desire to put himself in your presence, yet hath not much to say when he is come: yet hath it as much to say as you can think; because what degrees soever of honour, respect, and devotion, you can imagine or beleeve to be in any, this letter tells you, that all those are in me towards you. So that for this letter you are my Secretary; for your worthiness, and your opinion that I have a just estimation of them, write it: so that it is as long, and as good, as you think it; and nothing is left to me, but as a witness, to subscribe the name of

Your most humble servant
J. D.

Though this letter be yours, it will not misbecome or disproportion it that I mention your Noble brother, who is gone to Cleave, not to re-

> turn till towards Christmas, except the business
> deserve him not so long.

Source: Letters, No. 4 (5-6)

Also in Gosse (I: 236-37)

Commentary

Gosse (I: 237) and Bald (Life 187, n. 2) both date this letter July 1610; Bald further suggests that it was written early in July because the postscript mentions Bridget White's brother going to Cleves. The English force under Sir Edward Cecil left in July 1610. See pp. 233-35 for a discussion of the dates of the letters to Bridget White.

Donne's imagery in this letter, although mixed throughout the letter, is derived directly from his two pieces of news: S^{r}. E. Herbert was recovering from a fever and much of the imagery has to do with sickness, health, and medicine; Bridget White's brother is going to Cleaves and the remainder of the imagery in this letter has to do with war.

81

To the same. [Mrs. Bridget White]

> MADAME,
>
> THis letter which I send enclosed hath been yours many moneths, and hath languished upon my table for a passage so long, that as others send news in their letters, I send an antiquity in mine. I durst not tear it, after it was yours: there is some sacriledge in defacing any thing consecrated to you, and some impiety to despaire that any thing devoted to you should not be reserved to a good issue. I remember I should have sent it by a servant, of whose diligence

> I see I was too confident. I know not what it says: but I dare make this letter no longer, because being very sure that I always think the same thoughts of you, I am afraid I should fall upon the same words, and so send one letter twice together.
>
> Your very affectionate
> servant J.D.
>
> Novemb. 8.

Source: Letters No. 3 (4-5)

Also in Gosse (I: 235)

Commentary

This letter is a covering letter written in November 1610 to accompany Donne's July letter to Bridget White which he had not previously sent and is the last letter in this series to her. A single letter written to her in 1624 (No. 197) raises the possibility that Donne continued his correspondence, at least intermittently, over the intervening years.

1611

82

To my Lord G. H. [To Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Am near the execution of that purpose for France; though I may have other ends, yet if it do but keep me awake, it recompenses me well. I am now in the afternoon of my life, and then it is unwholesome to sleep. It is ill to look back, or give over in a course; but worse never to set out. I speake to you at this time of departing, as I should do at my last upon my death-bed; and I desire to deliver into your hands a heart and affections, as innocent towards you, as I shall to deliver my soul into Gods hands then. I say not this out of diffidence, as though you doubted it, or that this should look like such an excuse, as implyed an accusation; but because my fortune hath burdened you so, as I could not rectifie it before my going, my conscience and interpretation (severer I hope then yours towards my self) calls that a kinde of demerit, but God who hath not only afforded us a way to be delivered from our great many debts, contracted by our Executorship to Adam, but also another for our particular debts after, hath not left poor men unprovided, for discharge of morall and civill debts; in which, acknowledgement, and thankfulnesse is the same, as repentance and contrition is in spiritual debts: and though the value and dignity of all these be not perchance in the things, but in the acceptation, yet I cannot doubt of it, either in God, or you. But Sir, because there is some degree of thankfulnesse in asking more (for that confesses all former obligations, and a desire to be still in the same dependency) I must intreat you to continue that wherein you have most expressed your love to me, which is, to maintain me in the same room in my Lady Bedfords opinion, in the which you placed me. I professe to you that I am too much bound to her, for expressing every way her care of my fortune, that I am weary before she is; and out of a loathnesse, that so good works

> should be bestowed upon so ill stuffe, or that so much ill fortune should be mingled with hers, as that she should misse any thing that she desired, though it were but for me; I am willing to depart from farther exercising her indevours in that kinde. I shall be bold to deliver my poor Letters to her Ladiships hands, through yours, whilest I am abroad 'though I shall ever account my self at home, whilest I am in your memory.
>
> Your affectionate servant and lover
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 32 (93-96)

Also in Gosse (I: 283-)

Commentary

This letter can be dated by Donne's departure for the Continent with Sir Robert Drury, which occurred in November 1611. Although the letter is headed "To my Lord G.H.," it was clearly written to Sir Henry Goodyer, who was Donne's closest friend and his intermediary with the Countess of Bedford (whom Donne mentions in the letter). Donne here states his misgivings about the usefulness of this trip from the beginning (Bennett, "Donne's Letters from the Continent, 1611-12" 67-68). His association with Sir Robert Drury did not lead Donne to any secular employment of the kind he hoped for, nor did Drury himself ever achieve the kind of post at court he felt he deserved.

83

To my Honoured friend M. George Garrat [Garrard].

SIR,

I Would I were so good an Alchimist to perswade you that all the vertue of the best affections, that one could expresse in a sheet, were in this ragge of paper. It becomes my fortune to deale thus in single money; and I may hit better with this hail-shot of little Letters (because they may come thick) then with great bullets; and trouble my friends lesse. I confesse it were not long enough if it came to present my thankes for all the favours you have done me; but since it comes to begge more, perchance it may be long enough, because I know not how short you will be with an absent friend. If you will but write that you give me leave to keep that name still, it shall be the gold of your Letter: and for allay, put in as much newes as you will. We are in a place where scarce any money appeares, but base: as, I confesse, all matters of Letters is in respect of the testimonies of friendship; but obey the corruption of this place, and fill your Letters with worse stuffe then your own. Present my service to all those Gentlemen whom I had the honour to serve at our lodging, I cannot flie an higher pitch, then to say, that I am so much their servant as you can say I am. At the Queens armes in Cheapside, which is a Mercers, you may hear of one M. John Brewer, who will convay any Letter directed to me at Sir Rob. Druries at Amiens, though he know not me: and I should be glad to hear that this first that I sent into England had the fortune to finde you.

Yours
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 96 (264-65)

Also in Gosse (I: 285-86)

Textual Notes

Sir Robert Druries: Sir Robert Drury's

Commentary

Donne, with Sir Robert and Lady Drury, was settled in Amiens before the end of November 1611 because by 4 December 1611 John Chamberlain in London knew that they were there (Bennett, "Donne's Letters from the Continent, 1611-12" 68, 68n). Donne states in this letter that it is the first letter he has written since his arrival (at least to Garrard); hence, it was likely written in early December 1611.

John Brewer at the Queen's Arms in Cheapside "evidently looked after Sir Robert Drury's affairs for him when he was absent from London and was much trusted by him" (Bald, Donne and the Drurys 93).

84

To Sir Thomas Roe. [To Sir Henry Goodyer?]

SIR,

IT is an ease to your friends abroad, that you are more a man of businesse then heretofore; for now it were an injury to trouble you with a busie Letter. But by the same reason I were inexcusable if I should not write at all, since the lesse, the more acceptable; therefore, Sir, though I have no more to say, but to renew the obligations I have towards you, and to continue my place in your love, I would not forbear to tell you so. If I shall also tell you, that when this place affords any thing worth your hearing, I will be your relator, I think I take so long a day, as you would forget the debt, it appears yet to be so barren. Howsoever with every commodity, I shall say something, though it be but a descant upon this plain song, that I am

Your affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 16 (41)

Also in Gosse (II: 11-12)

Commentary

Bald (Life 245) accepts this letter as it is addressed, "To Sir Thomas Roe." The letter is dated December 1611 because Donne indicates that he is abroad and that he has, as yet, no news worth reporting. This message is repeated in a number of other letters written during the early part of Donne's visit to the Continent, and the date must be approximately correct. While the letter may be correctly addressed to Sir Thomas Roe, the content strongly suggests a letter to Goodyer since Donne refers to the relief of "your friends abroad, that you are more a man of businesse then heretofore." Goodyer's friends (especially Donne) were constantly worried by Goodyer's nonchalance in the face of serious financial troubles.

1612

85

[To Sir Henry Wotton?]

S^{r}. The relacon of occurrences heere I leaue to this gentleman M^{r} W^{lm}.
Strachey allwayes my good frend (who is desirous y^{r} Lp: should know
so much) and sometymes secretary to S^{r}. T. G: I dare boldly
say that the greatest folly he ever committed was to submitt
himself and parts to so meane a M^{r}. y^{o} may thinke this
a preposterous course in steed of commending a gentleman
to open his imperfections, but I know y^{r} Lp. so wise as out
of contraries to [draw/gather] true and necessarie conclusions:
and to say but truth for me to open my mouth in his
commendations were but to play the owle or some other
bird in a painted cloath in whose mouth some sentence
is put w^{ch} most men know: and so of his vertues. only this
I shall intereat that bysyde his merit he may for my
sake find himself welcome.

Source: Burley MS., f. 301

Transcription Notes

l. 8 $\overset{\text{draw}}{\text{gather}}$: "draw" appears written above "gather" in the MS.

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 333) identifies William Strachey and Sir Thomas Gates as two members of the Virginia Company who sailed to Virginia in May 1609. They were shipwrecked in the Bermudas in July and did not reach Virginia until 1610. Strachey wrote about the shipwreck in a letter published in Purchas his Pilgrimes (1625, iv. 1734). Strachey was appointed secretary and recorder of the colony after his arrival, but returned to England in 1611. Sir Thomas Gates was knighted on the Cadiz expedition in 1596. He had been appointed lieutenant-general of Virginia in 1609. After reaching Virginia with Strachey in 1610, Gates returned to England for a visit, but went back to Virginia as governor of the colony from 1611 to 1614. Simpson cites several references to Gates in Sir Henry Wotton's correspondence:

> when writing to Ralph Winwood in 1604 he says, 'I commend unto you the bearer hereof, Sir Thomas Gates, whom I entreat you to love, and to love me, and to assure yourself that you cannot love two honester men' (Pearsall Smith, Wotton, i. 320). In 1614 Wotton wrote to Winwood, 'The bearer is a servant to Sir Thomas Gates, and I hope hath learned some diligence from his master' (ibid., ii. 50).

Since Gates was on the Cadiz expedition, it is likely that Donne knew him and could have formed an unfavorable opinion of him. Wotton's references to Gates, however, imply that he liked him, unless one chooses to read them as irony. Wotton's second reference to Gates, "The bearer is a servant to Sir Thomas Gates, and I hope hath learned some diligence from his master" (Smith II: 50), might indicate that Gates was known to be demanding of his servants, which would partly agree with the letter under discussion. Presumably Donne knew Wotton well enough to be able to judge the effect of this letter on Wotton's reception of Strachey. According to Simpson's information, the letter would likely have been written after 1611 when Strachey's association with Gates appears to have ended. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") rejects this as a Donne letter.

86

To Sir H. Wootton. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
THat which is at first but a visitation,
and a civill office, comes quickly to
be a haunting, and an uncivill importunity:
my often writing might be subject to such
a misinterpretation, if it were not to you,
who as you know that the affection which
suggests and dictates them, is ever one, and
continuall, and uninterrupted; may be

pleased to think my Letters so too, and that all the pieces make but one long Letter, and so I know you would not grudge to read any intire book of mine, at that pace, as you do my Letters, which is a leafe a week: especially such Letters as mine, which (perchance out of the dulnesse of the place) are so empty of any relations, as that they oppresse not your meditations, nor discourse, nor memory. You know that for aire we are sure we apprehend and enjoy it, but when this aire is rarified into fire, we begin to dispute whether it be an element, or no: so when Letters have a convenient handsome body of news, they are Letters; but when they are spun out of nothing, they are nothing, or but apparitions, and ghosts, with such hollow sounds, as he that hears them, knows not what they said. You (I think) and I am much of one sect in the Philosophy of love; which though it be directed upon the minde, doth inhere in the body, and find piety entertainment there: so have Letters for their principall office, to be seals and testimonies of mutuall affection, but the materialls and fuell of them should be a confident and mutuall communicating of those things which we know. How shall I then who know nothing write Letters? Sir, I learn knowledge enough out of yours to me. I learn that there is truth and firmnesse and an earnestness of doing good alive in the world; and therefore, since there is so good company in it, I have not so much desire to go out of it, as I had, if my fortune would afford me any room in it. You know I have been no coward, nor unindustrious in attempting that; nor will I give it over yet. If at last, I must confesse, that I dyed ten years ago, yet as the Primitive Church admitted some of the *Jews* Ceremonies, not for perpetuall use, but because they would bury the Synagogue honourably, though I dyed at a blow then when my courses were diverted, yet it wil please me a little to have had a long funerall, and to have kept my self so long above ground without putrefaction. But this is melancholique discourse; To change therefore from this Metaphoricall death to the true, and that with a little more relish of mirth, let me tell you the good nature of the executioner of *Paris*: who when *Vatan* was beheaded, (who dying in the profession of the Religion, had made his peace with God in the prison, and so said nothing at the place of execution) swore he had rather execute forty Huguenots, then one Catholique, because the Huguenot used so few words, and troubled him so little, in respect of the dilatory ceremonies of the others, in dying. Cotton the great Court Jesuite hath so importuned the Q. to give some modifications to the late interlocutory arrest against the Jesuits, that in his presence, the C. Soisons, who had been present in the Court at the time of the arrest, and Servin the Kings Advocate, who urged it, and the Premier president, were sent for: They came so well provided with their books, out of which they assigned to the Q. so many, so evident places of seditious doctrine, that the Q. was well satisfied, that it was fit by all means to provide against the teaching of the like doctrine in France. The D. of Espernon is come to Paris, with (they say) 600 horse in his train; all which company, came with him into the Court: which is an insolency remarkable here. They say that scarce any of the Princes appear in the streets, but with very great trains. No one enemy could wast the treasures of France so much, as so many friends do: for the Q. dares scarce deny any, that so she may have the better leave to make haste to advance her Marquis of Ancre, of whose greatnesse, for matter of command, or danger, they have no great fear, he being no very capable nor stirring man: and then for his drawing of great benefits from the Q. they make that use of it, that their suits passe with lesse opposition. I beleeve the treasure is scattered, because I see the future receipt charged with so very many and great pensions. The Q. hath adventured a little to stop this rage of the Princes importunity, by denying a late suit of Soissons: which though the other Princes grudge not that Soisson should faile, for he hath drawn infinite sums already, yet they resent it somewhat tenderly, that any of them should be denyed, when the Marquis obtains. That which was much observed in the Kings more childish age, when I was last here, by those whom his father appointed to judge, by an assiduous observation, his naturall inclination, is more and more confirmed, that his inclinations are cruell, and tyrannous; and when he is any way affected, his stammering is so extreme, as he can utter nothing. They cannot draw him to look upon a son of the Marquis, whom they have put into his service. And he was so extremely affectionate towards the younger son of Beaufort, that they have removed him to a charge which he hath, as he is made Prieur of Malta; but yet there passe such Letters between them, by stealth and practise, as (though it be between children) it is become a matter of State, and much diligence used to prevent the Letters. For the young Marquis of Vervueil, the K. speaks often of transplanting him into the Church, and once this Christmas delighted himself to see his young brother in a Cardinalls habit. Sir, it is time to take up, for I know, that any thing, from this place, as soon as it is certain, is stale. I have been a great while more mannerly towards my Lady Bedford, then to trouble her with any of mine own verses, but having found these French verses accompanied with a great deal of reputation here, I could not forbear to aske her leave to send them. I writ to you by M^{r}. Pory the 17 of Jan. here, and he carried that Letter to Paris, to gather news, like a snowball. He told me that Pindar is gone to Constantinople with Commission to remove and succeed Glover: I am afraid you have neglected that businesse. Continue me in M. Martins good opinion: I know I shall never fall from it, by any demerit of mine, and I know I need not fear it, out of any slacknesse or slipperinesse in him, but much businesse may strangle me in him. When it shall not trouble you to write to me, I pray do me the favour to tell me, how many you have received from me, for I have now much just reason to imagine, that some of my Pacquets have had more honour then I wished them: which is to be delivered into the hands of greater personages, then I addressed them unto. Hold me still in your own love, and proceed in that noble testimony of it, of which your Letter by M. Pory spoke, (which is the only Letter that I have received, since I came away) and beleeve me that I shall ever with much af-

fection, and much devotion joine both
your fortune and your last best happinesse,
with the desire of mine own in all my civill, and divine wishes, as the only retribution in the power of
Your affectionate servant
Jo. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 41 (120-27)

Also in Gosse (I: 290-94)

Textual Notes

l. 31 entertainment] entertained?

Notes

l. 48 "I dyed ten years ago": Donne lost his position with Sir Thomas Egerton and was unable to get another after his secret marriage to Anne More in 1601. Hence, he was "dead" to the world.

l. 61 Vatan was beheaded: Florimond du Puy, Seigneur de Vatan, was executed on January 2 (n.s.); see Journal de ma Vie, Mémoires du Maréchal de Bassompierre (ed. Chanterac, 4 vols., Paris, 1870-77) I: 299n.; cited in Bennett (68, n. 16).

l. 70 Cotton: Cotton is also mentioned by Donne in a letter to a brother of Anne Donne of 7 February 1612 (Folger MS Lb. 535, Beal No. 14). See the Commentary on that letter.

l. 74 C. Soisons: Comte de Soissons: Charles de Bourbon (1566-1612): Henry IV's first cousin and the younger brother of Henry I of Conde.

ll. 75-76 Servin: the king's attorney (see also the commentary for Folger MS L.b. 535, Letter No. 88).

l. 84 Duc de Espernon [Epernon]: a popular courtier with Henry III, Epernon was out of favor with Henry IV. However, after Henry IV's death Epernon was admitted to Marie de Medici's inner circle and became friendly with the young Louis XIII (Marvick 132).

l. 94 Marquis of Ancre (Concino): Concini and his wife had come to France in 1600 as members of Marie de Medici's Florentine retinue. They had married in 1601. After the death of Henry IV, Marie de Medici advanced Concini as quickly as she could. She first made it possible for Concini to buy the title of Marquis d'Ancre. Four months after Henry's murder, she made the Marquis the first gentleman of the king's bedchamber.

ll. 123-25 the younger son of Beaufort . . . is made Prieur of Malta: Alexandre de Vendôme, the half brother of Louis XIII by Gabrielle d'Estrées and the brother of the Duc de Vendôme, held the title of Prior of France, i.e., of the Knights of Malta.

ll. 130-31 Marquis of Vervueil: the illegitimate son of Henry IV, who was the half brother of Louis XIII and whom Louis resented because he was named after their father. The two boys were about the same age.

l. 143 M^{r} Pory: John Pory attended Cambridge, apparently around the time Donne attended (Bald, Life 47). Pory brought a letter to Donne on his way to Paris "on a semi-diplomatic mission, carrying to Cardinall du Perron the latest controversial works of Bishop Andrewes and Isaac Casaubon as a gift from

King James" (Bald, Life 247). Both later received honorary degrees from Oxford on the same day (Bald, Life 227).

l. 145	Pindar: Mr. Paul Pindar, English Ambassador to Constantinople who succeeded Sir Thomas Glover
l. 147	Glover: Sir Thomas Glover
ll. 148-49	M. Martin: Richard Martin, the lawyer, a contemporary of Donne's at Oxford, eventually became Recorder of London, but was principally known among his contemporaries as a wit (Bald, Life 190). Shapiro (295) suggests that he was a "particular friend" of Goodyer's. Shapiro gives no reason for this statement, but perhaps bases it on Goodyer's request to Donne to write an elegy for Martin after his death in 1617.

Commentary

Gosse (I: 294) accepts Sir Henry Wotton as the correct addressee of the letter and dates it February 1612 based on Donne's reference to Pindar becoming the English Ambassador to Constantinople: "Donne had plainly not arrived in Paris; the references to Constantinople are definite." Sir Dudley Carleton had written from Venice on the 28th of February, "I have news from Constantinople of the safe arrival thither of Mr. Paul Pindar, who having a happy passage of nineteen days, surprised Sir Thos. Glover before he was aware." I. A. Shapiro, however, shows that the letter must have been written to Sir Henry Goodyer because it contains a reference to Donne's habit of writing weekly letters to the recipient. Donne also encloses some French poetry for the Countess of Bedford, and Goodyer was Donne's intermediary with the Countess. Shapiro

(294) dates this letter "circa 14/24 January 1611/12." He gives no reason for this date, but Bennett assumes that Shapiro considers it to be the next of Donne's weekly letters to Goodyer after the letter of 7/17 January to which Donne refers in this letter.

The letter consists of two distinct parts: the first is an essay on letters; the second, news from Paris. The discussion about letters is consistent with Donne's ironic approach which appears in other letters. Here he begins by apologizing for his "empty" letters but follows this apology with detailed news from France. In other letters he is similarly ironic. He will, for example, discourse on the timeless quality of letters when he is late in replying.

87

To your selfe [George Garrard].

SIR,
ALl your other Letters, which came
to me by more hazardous waies, had
therefore much merit in them; but for
your Letter by M. Pory, it was but a little
degree of favour, because the messenger
was so obvious, and so certain, that you
could not chuse but write by him. But since
he brought me as much Letter as all the
rest, I must accept that, as well as the rest.
By this time, M. Garret, when you know
in your conscience that you have sent no
Letter, you beginne to look upon the su-
perscription, and doubt that you have
broken up some other bodies Letter: but
whose so ever it were it must speak the same
language, for I have heard from no body.
Sir, if there be a Proclamation in England
against writing to me, yet since it is there-
by become a matter of State, you might
have told M. Pory so. And you might have
told him, what became of Sir Tho. Lucies
Letter, in my first pacquet, (for any

> Letter to him makes any paper a pacquet, and any peece of single money a Medall) and what became of my Lady Kingsmels in my second, and of hers in my third, whom I will not name to you in hope that it is perished, and you lost the honour of giving it. Sir, mine own desire of being your servant, hath sealed me a Patent of that place during my life, and therefore it shall not be in the power of your forbidding, (to which your stiffe silence amounts) to make me leave being
>
> Your very affectionate servant
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 95 (262-63)

Also in Gosse (I: 286-87)

Commentary

Donne indicates in the body of the letter that it was written to George Garrard. This letter was written on or after 17 January 1612 when Donne received a single letter from Sir Henry Goodyer delivered by John Pory. In Letters No. 89, dated 7 February 1612, Donne indicates that he received a letter from Garrard on the first of that month. Hence, Donne's irony about receiving a letter from Garrard, when, in fact, he received no letter, could have been logical only between 17 January and 1 February 1612. Bald (Life 249) dates the Garrard letters similarly, but gives no explanation.

This letter also indicates that Donne expected to get letters from Sir Thomas Lucy and Lady Kingsmill. As Bald (Life 187) notes, this letter is evidence that Donne's correspondence with Lady Kingsmill continued beyond the extant sequence of letters to her which end in 1610 and do not resume until Donne wrote her a consoling letter on the death of her husband in 1624.

The letter also suggests connections among Donne's friends. Sir Thomas Lucy's niece, Mrs. Bridget Dunch, and Lady Kingsmill (by then an old woman) were the two patronesses to whom Donne's son dedicated *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*. Lady Kingsmill was also related to Sir Thomas Lucy. Her husband's (Henry Kingsmill's) cousin Constance was Sir Thomas Lucy's second wife. Donne's son altered the title of one of the letters to Goodyer in *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour* to read "*To my honoured friend S^r* T. Lucey."

88

[To a brother of Mrs. Anne Donne]

S^r

Thys ys my second letter to yo^w; that ys, my second fault. for letters from thys barren place, are well inough accepted, if they bee pardoned: we hear from paris (but I thinke scarse so soone as yo^w do) that the extreame great Confluence of all the princes and great persons thether w^t so great traines as haue not been ^{in} use before, breed generall ialousye and suspicion, though yt appear nt yet where the love wyll break. But one resultance owt of all ys easily discouerd, that the Religion ys like to suffer in france. for y^e D: of Boüillon ys so united to the great ones, especially to the Regent, and her purposes, as he neglects that party, w^{ch} vsed to receiue fauer and hart from hys good disposition towards them. The D: of Sully desperate of returne to any greatnes and for hys sonne y^e Marquis of Rosny, he ys yet under the affliction of an importunity and solicitation to resigne hys great office, of great M^r of the Artillery: and very like to loose yt. and hys grandfather, L'isdiguieres, (by a marriage) receives but yll satisfaction, beeinge come braue and stronge to Paris to giue countenance to y^e yonger Marquis hys pursuit of hys right, for retaininge that office. So that I can not perceiue but y^t they are very willing that those of y^t Religion should be discontent: that so yt might eyther appear as how much they are able to do, and where theyr strength consists; or that some act of discontent from them, might occasion and iustify seuere proceedings against them for in the last Assembly y^{t} was afforded them, when they presented onely petitions for y^{e} ratifyinge and the executinge of things granted unto them by former Edicts, they found the passage, so dull, and dilatory, as theyr tyme expird before they had any particular answer; and now when they send deputyes to the Court, to solicite a new Assembly they finde the same difficultyes: And that w^{ch} offends them as much as any of these affronts donne to the swordsmen, ys, a danger of Servin, the kings Attorney. He ys a Catholique, but a french Catholique. And, S^{r}, french-papistry, ys but like french velvet: a prety slack Religion that would soone wear owt and not of the three-piled papistry of Italy and Spayne. As he doth in all such occasions, so in thys last Arrest w^{ch} concernd the Jesuits, he used much vehemency against them. And though upon y^{e} Jesuit Cotton hys importunity, Servin and y^{e} Judge, (yt ys y^{e} president) beeinge converted by the Q: Regent, gaue so good a iustification of all that they had donne in that pleadinge and that Arrest, against y^{e} Jesuits, that shee then serued them to desist from movinge any modification of y^{e} arrest, yet a Cardinall hath since that tyme told Servin that hys best way ys, to dispatche himselfe of y^{t} place. w^{ch} he understands for a liberty to sell ytt, or a warninge that other way~~se~~ [es] he may loose all. So yt, S^{r}, as I sayd at first, all that directly or obliquely might succor y^{e} Religion, suffer great diminutions. The Edict against Duells hath been lately infringed much. And wyll oftner, if the Q: be not seveor in the observinge of yt; by reason of the very many and very different sortes of people at this tyme, at paris. Two or [three] haue been committed for y^{e} breach of yt and remain so; but as yet I haue heard of no seuerer prosecution. I beseech y^{ow} p^{r}-sent my humble thanks and services, where yo^{w} know they are due. I should not haue foreborne to haue written to S^{r} Th: Grymes if thys place gaue any thinge w^{ch} he desird to know. To hym and to hys Lady, I ame bound to do better offices then words and letters and, if my fortune could expresse yt. When ther ys any way open to yo^{w}, to send into the wight, I may giue this letter a passage. If one could not gett to that Ile, but by the north west discouery, I [could not] thinke the returne so difficult and dilatory for yet I haue had no returne from thence of any letter, since my com minge out of England. and ~~thys~~ thys silence, especially at thys tyme when I make account yt yo^{r} sister ys near her paynfull and dangeerous passadge, doth somewhat more affect mee, then I had thought any thinge of thys world could haue donne. Good S^{r}, if perchance any letter come to y^{ow} from thenc[e], do me the fauor to send yt to m^{r} John Bruer, at y^{e} Q: armes, a mercer in cheapside, from whence any thinge wyll safely be brought to here

y^{r} Affectionate frinde & Servant
J. DONNE

Amyens, 7. febru:
i6ii [2]

Source: Folger, MS L.B. 535 (Beal No. 14)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (I: 287-89)

Transcription Notes

The last line of the body of the letter, the closing, and Donne's signature are written along the left margin of the holograph. See also Letter No. 42 of Letters (127-34).

Commentary

The Cotton referred to in this letter and in the letter to Sir Henry Wotton Feb. 1612 (Letter No. 86) was a Jesuit priest who had been the confessor to Henry IV, not Sir Robert Cotton as Gosse conjectures (Gosse I: 289). The concern Donne expresses for his wife in childbirth in this letter is repeated in Letter No. 93 written to Sir Henry Goodyer from Paris the 9 Apr. 1612 (Gosse I: 298).

Donne describes the political situation in France in early 1611. Henry IV (Henry of Navarre), the king who had united France by gaining control over the powerful members of the nobility, had been assassinated in 1610. The Queen, Marie de Medici, became Regent for the young Louis XIII. The lack of a strong king destabilized the political situation and some members of the nobility resumed intriguing against the crown. The Duc 'de Bouillon was one of these incorrigible intriguers. He had been the subject of a military expedition by Henry IV in 1606. He was a leader of the Huguenots, who, as Donne says, was negotiating with the Queen against his own party. The Duc de Sully (Maximilien de Béthune) had been an extremely important minister of Henry IV's. He was superintendent of finances (1599-1611), grand master of the artillery (1599-1610), governor of the Bastille and performed many other important duties. He was also a Huguenot and was responsible for keeping the Huguenots contented. Sully was not in favor with Marie de Medici, who ignored him, and his enemies at court forced his resignation as superintendent of finances and governor of the Bastille. Sully had resigned his position as grand master of the artillery 30 April 1610 in favor of his son Maximilien II de Béthune (the Marquis of Rosny) and was to have been appointed by Henry IV as "maréchal de France," a position which could not be held at the same time. Henry's death prevented this appointment, although Sully's son was able to retain the office of master of artillery until his early death in 1634. The Duc de L'isdigures, the governor of Dauphine and another important Protestant nobleman, was the grandfather of Francois de Crequi, who had become the wife of the Marquis of Rosny in 1609, and L'isdigures, therefore, had an interest in the Marquis's appointment. The Assemblies that Donne refers to are the assemblies of the Huguenots which, although discouraged by Henry IV, continued to meet to protect Huguenot interests and religious rights (summarized from David Buisseret 50, 140, 158, 181; and Desmond Seward, 179-80).

89

To your selfe. [To George Garrard]

SIR,
THe first of this moneth I received a Letter from you, no Letter comes so late, but that it brings fresh newes hither. Though I presume, M^r^ Pore, and since, Sir Rob. Rich came after the writing of that Letter, yet it was good newes to me, that you thought me worthy of so good a testimony. And you were subtile in the disguise: for you shut up your Letter, thus, Lond. 22. in our stile, but I am not so good a Cabalist, as to finde in what moneth it was written. But, Sir, in the offices of so

spirituall a thing as friendship, so momentary a thing as time, must have no consideration. I keep it therefore to read every day, as newly written: to which vexation it must be subject, till you relieve it with an other. If I ought you not a great many thankes for every particular part of it, I should yet thanke you for the length; and love it, as my mistresses face, every line and feature, but best all together. All that I can do towards retribution, is, (as other bankrupts do in prison) to make means by Commissioners, that a great debt may be accepted by small summes weekly. And in that proportion I have paid my tribute to you, almost ever since I came, and shall still do so. You know that they say, those are the strongest, and the firmest, and most precious things, which are composed of the most, and smallest parts. I will flatter my self therefore, that the number of my Letters may at last make a strong argument of my desire to serve you, but because I remember, out of this Philosophy, that they should be little, as well as many, lest this Letter should not get into the building, it shall be no bigger; thus much addition will not much disfigure it, that it swear to you that I am

Your affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Sir, I cry you mercy for sealing your sisters letter, but I deliver you up my authority, and I remember you, that you have hers to open it again. You will the easilier forgive me, that I write no newes, when you observe by this transgression, that I live in a place which hath quenched in me even the remembrance of good manners. By naming her, I have made my postscript the worthyest place of my letter: and therefore I chuse that place to present my service to all the company at our lodging; in which house, if I cannot get room for a pallat, at my return, my comfort is, that I can ever hope to be so near them as the Spittle in the Savoy, *where they receive Travellers*.

Source: *Letters* No. 89 (246-48)

Also in Gosse (I: 300)

Commentary

The letter, although headed "To your selfe," was undoubtedly written to George Garrard. Donne shared lodgings with Garrard and wrote to Garrard's sister Martha. Both facts are mentioned in the postscript of this letter.

Gosse (I: 300) dates this letter 9 April 1612 without giving a reason. Bennett, however, dates this letter "After 1 Feb.?" The date is probably 7 February 1612 because in the postscript Donne apologizes to Garrard for sealing an enclosed letter to his sister, and tells Garrard he may open it. The enclosed letter to Martha Garrard was printed in both the 1635 Poems and the 1651 Letters. In the Letters it is not dated, but in the Poems it is dated 7 February 1612. This in itself is not incontrovertible evidence, because the text of the 1635 Poems is inferior to that of the Letters, but this date is supported by other internal evidence in the letters. Donne conjectures that the letter he received on the first of the month (i.e., 1 February) was written after John Pory and Sir Robert Rich left England for France. John Pory delivered a letter to Donne in Amiens on or before 17 January, and Sir Robert Rich spent several days in Amiens a week or two later. (Donne wrote the verse letter "To the Lady Carey and Mistress Essex-Riche" for Sir Robert Rich during his visit.) If Donne is correct in his conjectures, Garrard's letter was written on 22 January 1612 (English style).

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THE PROSE LETTERS OF JOHN DONNE

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY BY

WILLIAM DAVIES

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A THESIS

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108	To Viscount Rochester	Spring 1613	311
109	To Martha Garrard	1613	312
110	To Sir Henry Goodyer	17 July 1613	314
111	To Viscount Rochester	After 22 July 1613	317
112	To Viscount Rochester	Summer 1613	321
113	To Sir Robert Ker	1613	324

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114	To Sir Henry Goodyer	Early August 1613.	325
115	To the Countess of Bedford	Fall 1613.	327
116	To Sir Robert Ker	23 September 1613.	329
117	To Sir Robert Ker	Late September 1613?	331
118	To George Garrard	Late September 1613.	332
119	To Sir Henry Goodyer	23 December 1613	334
120	To Sir Robert Ker	1 January 1614	336
121	To Sir Henry Goodyer	19 January 1614.	338
122	To Sir Robert Ker	January 1614	340
123	To Sir Henry Goodyer	Before 12 February 1614. . .	341
124	To Sir Henry Goodyer	12 February 1614	343
125	To Sir Henry Goodyer	February 1614.	347
126	To Sir Henry Goodyer	14 March 1614.	349
127	To Sir Robert Ker	March? 1614.	353
128	To the Earl of Somerset	14-19 March 1614	355
129	To Sir Robert Ker	20 March 1614.	357
130	To Sir Robert Ker	21 March 1614.	360
131	To the Earl of Somerset	Spring 1614.	362
132	To Sir Robert Ker	Spring 1614?	364
133	To Sir Robert Ker	May 1614	365
134	To the Countess of Bedford	1614	366
135	To Lord Hay	July 1614.	371
136	To Sir Robert More	28 July 1614	373
137	To George Garrard	4 August 1614.	375
138	To Sir Robert More	10 August 1614	378
139	To George Garrard	August 1614?	379

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140	To Sir Henry Goodyer	19 August 1614	381
141	To Mr. George Garrard	Late August 1614?	384
142	To Sir Nicholas Carew (Carey)	17 September 1614	385
143	To Sir William Trumbull	20 September 1614	386
144	To Sir George More	3 December 1614	388
145	To Sir Henry Goodyer	13 December 1614	390
146	To Sir Henry Goodyer	18 December 1614	392
147	To Sir Henry Goodyer	20 December 1614	393
148	To Sir Edward Herbert	23 January 1615	398
149	To Sir Robert Ker	27 January 1615	400
150	To Sir Henry Wotton	February? 1615	402
151	To Sir Henry Goodyer	March? 1615	403
152	To Sir Robert Ker	17 April 1615	407
153	To Donne's Mother	Spring 1615	408
154	To Sir Robert Ker	Early June 1615	411
155	To Sir Henry Wotton?	1615?	412
156	To Sir Robert Ker	4 November 1616	416
157	To Sir Robert Ker	4 November 1616	417
158	To Sir Henry Goodyer	22 December 1617	418
159	To Sir Tobie Mathew	Before 9 March 1619	421
160	To Sir Henry Goodyer	9 March 1619	423
161	To Sir Henry Goodyer	4 April 1619	426
162	To Sir Robert Ker	4 April 1619	430
163	To Sir Edward Herbert	April 1619	432
164	To the Countess of Montgomery	April 1619	436
165	To Sir Tobie Mathew	16/26 August 1619	438

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166	To Sir Dudley Carleton	31 August 1619	440
167	To Sir Henry Goodyer	Spring 1620.	443
168	To George Villiers (Buckingham)	8 August 1621.	445
169	To Sir Henry Goodyer	30 August 1621	446
170	To George Villiers (Buckingham)	13 September 1621.	451
171	To Sir Henry Goodyer	5 October 1621	453
172	To Sir Henry Goodyer	11 October 1621.	457
173	To Sir Henry Goodyer	25 October 1621.	459
174	To George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury	After 22 November 1621	461
175	To Sir Tobie Mathew	After 1621?.	463
176	To Sir Henry Goodyer	26 February 1621	464
177	To Sir Henry Goodyer	23 April 1622.	466
178	To Sir Henry Martin	9 May 1622	467
179	To Sir Robert Ker	25 July 1622	470
180	To Sir Robert Ker	2 August 1622.	472
181	To Sir Henry Goodyer	19 September 1622.	472
182	To Sir Henry Goodyer	24 September 1622.	476
183	To the Queen of Bohemia	October? 1622.	477
184	To Sir Henry Goodyer	4 October 1622	478
185	To Sir Henry Goodyer	18 October 1622.	481
186	To Sir Thomas Roe	1 December 1622.	484
187	To George Villiers (Buckingham)	Spring 1623.	488
188	To Sir Henry Goodyer	Early July 1623.	490
189	To Sir Nicholas Carey (Carew)	23 July 1623	492
190	To Sir Robert Ker	Summer 1623.	493

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192	To George Villiers (Buckingham)	February 1624.	498
193	To the Queen of Bohemia	February 1624.	502
194	To "a great lady in the suite of the Queen of Bohemia"	1 February 1624.	504
195	To the Earl of Dorset?	c. 1 February 1624	505
196	To Sir Nicholas Carey (Carew)	1 September 1624	506
197	To Bridget White (Lady Kingsmill)	26 October 1624.	508
198	To Sir Edward Conway	7 December 1624.	519
199	To Sir Robert Ker	Early March 1625	522
200	To Sir Robert Ker	2 April 1625	525
201	To Sir Robert Ker	3 April 1625	526
202	To Sir Robert Ker	After 27 March and before 1 November 1625 (probably April-June).	527
203	To Sir Nicholas Carey (Carew)	21 June 1625	530
204	To Sir Henry Wotton	12 July 1625	531
205	To Sir Thomas Roe	25 November 1625	533
206	To Sir Henry Goodyer	21 December/1625	536
207	To the Queen of Bohemia	Early 1626	540
208	To Nicholas Carey (Carew)	26 June 1626	541
209	To John Williams (Bishop of Lincoln)	22 August 1626	543
210	To Sir Robert Ker	4 January 1626	545
211	To Sir Robert Ker	5 January 1627	546
212	To Sir Robert Ker	2 April 1627	547
213	To Sir Robert Ker	3 April 1627	549
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216	To Mrs. Cokayne	24? August 1628	554
217	To Mrs. Cokayne	1628	557
218	To the Earl of Middlesex	18 November 1628	563
219	To Sir George More	22 June 1629	566
220	To George Garrard	December 1630	568
221	To Mrs. Cokayne	December 1630	575
222	To Mrs. Cokayne	Soon after 15 January 1630	577
223	To George Garrard	1 November? 1630	582
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225	To George Garrard	16-23 November 1630	590
226	To Mrs. Cokayne	1631	592

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II. Donne Letters Written for Others

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229	To Sir Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester	December 1611	606
230	To Sir David Murray	December 1611	607
231	To the Duchesse de Bouillon	June 1612	608

III. Possible Donne Letters from the Burley MS.

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232	To ?	After July 1604	610
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235	To Sir Henry Wotton?	?	614
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237	To Sir Henry Wotton?	?	615
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IV. Possible Donne Letters from the "Tobie Mathews Collection"

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241 620

V. Extracts from Donne's Letters Found in the "Losely MS".

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REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Each work listed here includes the full title and abbreviation. All references in the text use the abbreviations only.

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Bald, *Life*	*John Donne: A Life*. Oxford, 1970.
Feil	*Sir Tobie Matthew and His Collection of Letters*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1962.
Gardner, *Divine Poems*	*John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner. Oxford, 1952.
Gardner, *Elegies etc*.	*John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Helen Gardner. Oxford, 1965.
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Keynes	*A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's*. 4th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.
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Milgate, *Epithalamions*	*John Donne*: The Epithalamions, Anniversaries *and* Epicedes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
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Sermons	*The Sermons of John Donne*, eds. G. R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson. University of California Press, 1953-62. 10 vols.
Shapiro	"The Text of Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons*." *RES* 7 (1939): 291-330.
Shapiro, "The Burley Letters"	*TLS* 12 September 1952: 597.
Simpson, *Prose Works*	*A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, by Evelyn M. Simpson. 2nd ed. Oxford, 1948.

Smith	*The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, by Logan Pearsall Smith. Oxford, 1907. 2 vols.
Tobie Mathews Collection	*A Collection of Letters, made by S^r Tobie Mathews K^t*. 1660.

90

Of the same to the same, upon the like occasion. [To Sir Tobie Mathew?]

SIR,

YOur long silence, could never bring
me to any doubt of having lost my
Title to your friendship. It shall not be
in your power, to be able, so to prescribe,
even in your self, against me, but that still
I will be making my continuall claim to
your love. For Friendship hath so much
of Soveraignty, yea and of Religion too,
that no prescription can be admitted a-
gainst it. And as for losing you by any
forfeit, or demerit on my part, I have been
very carefull, and shall be watchfull still,
to blesse my self from such a curse, as that.
And indeed, such care is all the merit,
which can be hoped for, at the hands of
a person, so uselesse as my self. And from
this care now proceeds my haste, to thank
you for your last Letter; and to begge a
preservation of that love, which though,
at first, it fell not directly, and immediately
upon my self, but by way of reflection or
Briccole, through your other Friends (to
use the Metaphor of a Game, wherein I
congratulate that excellencie, to which my
Lord *Clifford* tells me, you have arrived)
yet now I dare conceive, that your love
belongs to me, even as a kind of due; since
I see, you now discern, that I am so much in
earnest, in loving you,

Source: *T.M.C*. No. 29 (64)

Notes

l. 22 Briccole: [Bricole] In tennis: the rebound of a ball from the wall of a tennis court, a side stroke against the wall.

Commentary

J. P. Feil suggests in his analysis of the T.M.C. that there are five undoubted Donne letters and three possible ones by him in Mathew's original collection (the collection before Donne's son added other letters to it). Of the five undoubtedly Donne's, three (including this letter) were previously unpublished (see also 64 and 67). Feil dates this letter in January or February 1612 when Donne was in Amiens and Sir Tobie Mathew was in Paris and suggests that it is a reply to one of Mathew's included in his collection (No. 157, p. 278). Feil links this letter of Donne's with the Mathew letter for two reasons: first, because of its appropriateness as a reply, and second, because of the reference to Lord Clifford. Feil (309-10) explains the reference to Lord Clifford as follows:

> When Matthew had sought Lord Roos in Paris in January 1610/11, he had found with him Sir Thomas Puckering and Henry, Lord Clifford, both of whom were enrolled in M. de Pluvinel's Academy (see Part I, chapter ii). Clifford had recently married Lord Salisbury's daughter, Frances, and then left for the continent to complete his education. Donne and Drury, too, had connections with Salisbury both directly and through Salisbury's closest friend, Sir Walter Cope; so if at any time during their stay in Amiens Clifford were to leave Paris--for instance, during the Christmas vacation--and go to or through the neighboring city, he would probably have visited them. He was in fact traveling at this time, and Donne's letter records such a visit and implies that not long before he had been seeing Matthew: he told Donne that Matthew had become an excellent tennis player. Now this is the only period for which there is independent evidence that Clifford was in touch with Matthew; and, since the latter was then 35 and the former 20, it is improbable that they would have interested each other much earlier or that Matthew's tennis would have been worth commenting on much later. (309-10)

91

To the Lady G. [Martha Garrard]

MADAM,

I Am not come out of *England*, if I remain in the Noblest part of it, your minde; Yet I confesse, it is too much diminution to call your minde, any part of *England*, or of this world, since every part even of your body, deserves titles of higher dignity. No Prince would be loth to die, that were assured of so faire a tombe to preserve his memory: but I have a greater vantage then so; for, since there is a Religion in friendship, and a death in absence, to make up an intire frame there must be a heaven too: and there can be no heaven so proportionall to that Religion, and that death, as your favour. And I am gladder that it is a heaven, then that it were a Court, or any other high place of this world, because I am likelier to have a room there then here; and better cheap. Madam my best treasure, is time; and my best imployment of that, is to study good wishes for you, in which I am by continuall meditation so learned, that your own good Angell, when it would do you most good, might be content to come and take instructions from

Your humble and affectionate servant
J. Donne

Source: *Letters* (244-45)

Collation

Title: *To the La. G.* *Letters* pp. 244-45
1635, 39 pp. 283-84
1649, 50, 54 pp. 273-74
1669 p. 271
1719 pp. 240-41

MADAM] MADAME 1635-39 *MADAM* 1719

l. 1 *England*] England 1635-54

ll. 1-2 remain] remaine 1635-54

l. 2 Noblest] noblest 1635-1719

l. 3 minde] mind 1719 yet] Yet 1635-1719
confesse,] confess, 1669 confess 1719

l. 4 minde] mind 1719

l. 5 England] England 1635-1719

l. 7 dignity] dignitie 1635-39 loth] loath 1635-69

l. 8 die] dye 1635-39 faire] fair 1649-1719
tombe] tomb 1669 1719

l. 9 memory] memorie 1635-39

l. 10 then] than 1635-39 1719 for] for, 1635-69

ll. 10-11 Religion] religion 1635-1719

l. 12 intire] entire 1649-54 1719 frame] friend 1635-1719

l. 14 proportionall] proportional 1669 1719
Religion] religion 1635-1719

l. 15 favour.] favour, 1635-69 favour; 1719
And] and 1635-1719

l. 16 heaven] Heaven 1719 then] than 1635-39 1669 1719
Court,] Court 1654 1669

l. 18 room] roome 1635-39

l. 19 there] there, 1635-1719 then] than 1635-39 1669 1719
here;] here, 1635-1719 cheap] cheape 1635-39
Madam] Madam, 1635-1719

l. 20 treasure,] treasure 1635-1719 time;] time, 1635-1719

ll. 20-21 imployment] employment 1719

l. 21 that, is] that (next my thoughts of thankfullnesse [thankfulness 1669 1719] for my redeemer [Redeemer 1669 1719]) is 1635-1719 study] studie 1635-39

l. 22 which] which, 1635-69 am] am, 1719
continuall] continual 1669 1719

ll. 23-24 learned, that your own good Angell] learned, that any creature (except your owne [own 1649-1719] good Angell [Angel 1669-1719]) 1635-1719

l. 24 do] doe 1635-54

l. 25 be] bee 1635

The *Letters* do not include a date or address.]

Amvens the]
7. of Febr.] 1635
here, 1611.]

Amyens the]
7. of Feb.] 1639-54
here, 1611.]

Amyens the]
7. of Febr.] 1669
here 1611.]

Amyens, the]
7th of *Febr*.] 1719
here, 1611.]

J. Donne] I.D. 1635-54 J.D. 1669 1719

Commentary

Gosse (289) and Merrill (309) suggest that this letter was written to Donne's sister, Lady Jane Grymes, wife of Sir Thomas Grymes. Gosse links this letter with another dated the same day written "to one of his brothers-in-law" (Sir Robert More) that suggests that Donne feels an obligation to write to Sir Thomas and his wife. R. E. Bennett assigns this letter to either Martha Garrard (Garrard's sister) or to some lady of Garrard's acquaintance, and R. C. Bald simply assigns the letter to Martha Garrard. Bald's assigning the letter to Martha Garrard seems justified because Donne also wrote to George Garrard and others on February 7 when the opportunity arose of sending a packet of letters to England. In fact, this letter is followed immediately in the *Letters* by one to George Garrard that contains a postscript in which Donne apologizes for sealing the letter he is including to Garrard's sister. Donne's compliments in this letter, moreover, are more logically addressed to a private citizen than a great lady, since he states that her favor is not "a Court or any other high place of this world."

92

To Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

IF this which I send you inclosed give me right intelligence, I present you a way by which you may redeem all your former wastes, and recompense your ill fortunes, in having sometimes apprehended unsuccesfull suits, and (that which I presume you affect most) ease your self from all future inquisition of widowes or such businesses as aske so over industrious a pursuit, as devest a man from his best happinesse of enjoying himself. I give you (I think) the first knowledge, of two millions confiscated to the Crown of England: of which I dare assure my self the coffers have yet touched none nor have the Commissioners for suits any thing to oppose against a suit founded upon this confiscation, though they hold never so strictly to their instructions. After you have served your self with aproportion, I pray make a petition in my name for as much as you think may be given me for my book out of this; for, but out of this, I have no imagination. And for a token of my desire to serve him, present M. Fowler with 3 or 4000 li of this since he was so resolved never to leave his place, without a suit of that value. I wish your cousen in the town, better provided, but if he be not, here is enough for him. And since I am ever an affectionate servant to that journey, acquaint M. Martin from me, how easie it will be to get a good part of this for Virginia. Upon the least petition that M. Brook can present he may make himself whole again, of all which the Kings servants M. Lepton and master Waterouse, have endammaged him. Give him leave to offer to M. Hakevill enough to please himself, for his Aurum Reginae. And if M. Gherard have no present hopefull designe upon a worthy Widow, let him have so much of this as will provide him that house and coach which he promised to lend me at my return. If M. Inago Jones be not satisfied for his last Maske (because I hear say it cannot come to much) here is enough to be had: This is but a copy, but if Sir Ro. Cotton have the originall he will not deny it you; if he hath it not, no body else hath it, nor can prevent you; husband it well, which you may easily doe, because I assure my self none of the children nor friends of the party condemned will crosse you or importune the King for any part. If I get no more by it, yet it hath made me a Letter. And Sir (to depart from this Mine) in what part of my Letters soever you find the remembrance of my humble service to my Lord of *Bedford*, I beseech you ever think them intended for the first, and in that ranke present them. I have yet received but one Letter form you which was of the 10 of *December* by M. *Pory*, but you see that as long as there is one egge left in the nest, I never leave laying, nor should although you had sent none since; all at last will not amount to so good a testimony as I would fain give how much I am

Your affectionate servant and lover,
J. Donne.

Sir, I write this Letter in no very great degree of a convalescence from such storms of a stomach colick as kept me in a continuall vomiting, so that I know not what I should have been able to doe to dispatch this winde, but that an honest fever came and was my physick: I tell you of it onely lest some report should make it worse, for me thinks that they who love to adde to news should think it a master-piece to be able to say no worse of any ill fortune of mine then it deserves, since commonly it deserves worse then they can say, but they did not, and I am reprieved. I finde dying to be like those facts which denying makes felony: when a sicknesse examines us, and we confess that we are willing to die, we cannot, but those who are-----incurre the penalty: and I may die yet, if talking idly be an ill sign. God be with you.

Source: *Letters* No. 19 (54-57)

Also in Gosse (I: 239-41)

Notes

1. 24 M. Fowler: The Queen's secretary. This letter suggests, as Shapiro points out, that Donne unsuccessfully attempted to obtain Fowler's post as secretary to the Queen. Donne asks

Goodyer to speak to Fowler for a position that must have been Fowler's own in Letter No. 34. According to this letter, Fowler wanted much more than the position was worth.

l. 31 M. Martin: Richard Martin. See Letter No. 86 Notes. This letter suggests that Martin was active in raising funds for the Virginia Company.

l. 33 M. Brook: Christopher Brook, a friend of Donne's since their days at Lincoln's Inn.

ll. 35-36 M. Lepton and Master Waterouse: not identified

l. 38 M. Hakevill: William Hakewill (1574-1655) was at the Inns of Court at the same time as Donne. Hakewill was a member of the parliament of 1601 with Donne (Bald, Life 114), a member of Donne's social circle at the Mermaid Tavern (192n.), and a shareholder in the Virginia Company (435).

l. 39 Aurum Reginae: Queen's gold

M. Gherard: George Garrard

l. 45 Inago Jones: Inigo Jones

ll. 48-49 Sir Robert Cotton: See Letters No. 21 and 26.

l. 60 My Lord of Bedford: Shapiro suggests (and must be correct) that the printer wrongly expanded my L. Bedford to my Lord of Bedford when Donne meant Lady Bedford.

l. 64 M. Pory: John Pory. See Letter No. 86 Notes.

Commentary

Shapiro ("The Text of Donne's Letters" 295) corrects Gosse's dating of this letter. Gosse (I: 241) dates the letter in the summer or early autumn of 1610 because he accepts a suggestion by Jessop that in "the early part of this letter there is a series of far-fetched and obscure allusions to the debates in Parliament on the Great Contract of 1610." Jessop (quoted in Gosse) notes that the "names of Hakewill, Brook, Martin and Sir Robert Cotton are those of prominent speakers in the debates." There is another connection between these men and Donne, however. As Shapiro points out, they were all members of the club that met at the Mermaid Tavern. Shapiro dates this letter (as does Bennett) February or March 1612 and Bald (_Life_ 195) states that it was "written from France early in 1612." The evidence for dating the letter is Donne's statement that he has received only one letter from Goodyer dated "10 of December by M. _Pory_." From another of Donne's letters (Letter No. 86) we know that Pory visited Donne at Amiens on 17 January 1611/12.

This letter which Gosse calls "a curious outburst of jocose extravagance" is an unusual letter for Donne to have written. Bald (_Life_ 195) suggests that it

> is in the same vein of fooling as the Mitre feasters [the same club as those who met at the Mermaid Tavern or possibly another with overlapping membership] amused themselves with, and may well have been intended for the amusement of the sireniacal gentlemen. . . . But the letter is a heavy-handed piece of work, altogether lacking the verve of the lines to Coryate. (_Life_ 195)

93

To the Honorable Knight Sir H. Goodere
[Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
IF I would go out of my way for excuses,
or if I did not go out of my way from
them; I might avoid writing now because
I cannot chuse but know, that you have in
this town abler servants, and better under-

standing the persons and passages of this Court. But my hope is not in the application of other mens merits, to me however abundant. Besides, this town hath since our comming hither, afforded enough for all to say. That which was done here the 25 of *March*, and which was so long called a publication of the marriages, was no otherwise publique then that the Spa. Ambassador, having that day an audience delivered to the Queen that his Master was well pleased with all those particulars which had been formerly treated. And the French Ambassador in *Spain* is said to have had instruction, to do the same office in that Court, the same day. Since that, that is to say, these 4 last days, it hath been solemnized with more outward bravery then this Court is remembred to have appeared in. The main bravery was the number of horses which were above 800 Caparazond. Before the daies, the town was full of the 5 Challengers cartells, full of Rodomontades: but in the execution, there were no personall reencounters, nor other triall of any ability, then running at the Quintain, and the Ring. Other particulars of this, you cannot chuse but hear too much, since at this time there come to you so many French men. But lest you should beleeve too much, I present you these 2 precautions, that for their Gendarmery, there was no other trial then I told you; & for their bravery, no true stuffe. You must of necessity have heard often of a Book written against the Popes jurisdiction, about three moneths since, by one *Richer*, a D^{r}. and Syndique of the Sorbonists, which Book hath now been censured by an assembly of the Clergie of this Archbishoprick, promoved with so much diligence by the Cardinall *Peroun*, that for this businesse he hath intermitted his replie to the Kings answer, which now he retires to intend seriously: I have not yet had the honour to kisse his Graces hand, though I have received some half-invitations to do it. *Richer* was first accused to the Parliament, but when it was there required of his delators to insist upon some propositions in his Book, which were either against Scripture, or the Gallican Church, they desisted in that pursuit. But in the censure which the Clergie hath made, though it be full of modifications and reservations of the rights of the King, and the Gallican Churches, there is this iniquitie, that being to be published by commandement of the Assembly, in all the Churches of Paris, which is within that Diocese, and almost all the Curates of the Parishes of Paris being Sorbonists, there is by this means a strong party of the Sorbonists themselves raised against Richer; yet against this censure, and against three or four which have opposed Richer in print, he meditates an answer. Before it should come forth I desired to speak with him, for I had said to some of the Sorbonist of his party, that there was no proposition in his Book, which I could not shew in Catholique authors of 300 years: I had from him an assignation to meet, and at the hour he sent me his excuse, which was, that he had been traduced to have had conference with the Ambassadors of England, and the States, and with the D. of Bovillon, and that he had accepted a pension of the King of England; and withall, that it had been very well testified to him that day, that the Jesuits had offered to corrupt men with rewards to kill him. Which I doubt not but he apprehended for true, because a messenger whom I sent to fixe another time of meeting with him, found him in an extreme trembling, and irresolutions: so that I had no more, but an intreaty to forbear comming to his house, or drawing him out of it, till it might be without danger or observation. They of the Religion held a Synod at this time in this Town, in which the principall businesse is to rectifie, or at least to mature, against their Provinciall Synod, which shall be held in May, certain opinions of Tilenus a Divine of Sedan, with which the Churches of France are scandalized. The chief point is, Whether our salvation be to be attributed to the passive merit of Christ, which is his death, or to his active also, which is his fulfilling of the Law. But I doubt not but that will be well composed, if Tilenus who is here in person with two other assistants, bring any disposition to submit himself to the Synod, and not onely to dispute. I doe (I thank God) naturally and heartily abhorre all schism in Religion so much, as, I protest, I am sorry to finde this appearance of schism amongst our adversaries the Sorbonists; for I had rather they had held together, to have made a head against the usurpations of the Ro. Church, then that their disuniting should so enfeeble them, as that the Parliament should be left alone to stand against those tyrannies. Sir, you will pardon my extravagancies in these relations. I look upon nothing so intentively as these things, nor fals there any thing within my knowledge, which I would conceal from you. Though it concern not you to know it, yet me thinks it concerns me to tell it. That Cook of which you writ to me, is come hither, and hath brought me other Letters, but not those of which you writ to me, which pacquet, he saies, you received again of him; whether by his falshood, or by your diligence in seeking a worthier messenger, I know not; but I am sure I never lost any thing with more sorrow, because I am thereby left still in uncertainties, and irresolutions, of that which I desire much to know in womens businesses. If you write this way any more, chuse no other means, then by M^r Bruer, at the Queens Arms a Mercer in Cheapside: he shall alwaies know where we are, and we are yet in a purpose to go from hence within a fortnight, and dispose our selves to be at Frankford the 25 of May, when the election of the Emperor shall be there. Though I be meerly passive in all this pilgrimage, yet I shall be willing to advance that design; because upon my promise that I would doe so, Sir Rob. Rich gave me his, that he would divert from his way to Italy so much, as to be there then. When I came to this Town I found M^r Matthew, diligent to finde a means to write to you; so that at this time, when there go so many, I cannot doubt but he provides himself, therefore I did not ask his commandement, nor offer him the service of this Pacquet. Sir, you are not evener to your self, in your most generall wishes of your own good, then I am in my particular, of which none rises in me, that is not bent upon your enjoying of peace and reposednesse in your fortunes,

in your affections, and in your conscience;
more then which I know not how to
wish to
Paris *the* 9 Apr. *Your very affectionate servant and*
1612. *here*. *lover* J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 42 (127-34)

Also in Gosse (I: 295-)

Notes

l. 16 the Queen: the Queen-regent, Marie de Medici. See Letters No. 86, 88.

l. 28 Rodomontades: a vainglorious brag or boast, from the name of the boastful Saracen leader Rodomont in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (*O.E.D*.)

l. 31 the Quintain: a stout post or plank, or some object mounted on such a support, set up as a mark to be tilted at with lances or poles, or thrown at with darts as an exercise of skill for horsemen or footmen (*O.E.D*.)

l. 32 the Ring: a metal ring suspended from a post which each of a number of riders endeavored to carry off on the point of his lance (*O.E.D*.)

l. 42 Dr. Richer: See Commentary.

l. 46 Cardinall Peroun: See Commentary.

l. 56 Gallican Church: Catholic Church of France

l. 77 D. of Bovillon: Duc 'de Bouillon, a Protestant nobleman. Sir Robert Drury was in constant attendance on the Duke during his stay in Paris.

l. 94 *Tilenus*: a Huguenot theologian

l. 120 that Cook: See Letter No. 94 Note.

l. 132 M^r^ Bruer: a servant of Sir Robert Drury's

l. 143 Sir Rob. Rich: Later 2nd Earl of Warwick.

l. 146 M^r^ Matthew: Sir Tobie Mathew.

Commentary

Donne's letter, written from Paris, is addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer and dated 9 April 1612 (continental style). Bennett and Bald accept both the date and that the letter was written to Goodyer. Donne begins by describing the double betrothal of Louis XIII to Anne of Austria and of Louis's sister Elizabeth to the heir to the Spanish throne, which was made public on 25 March but which was not celebrated until the 5, 6, and 7 of April because of the recent death of the Queen's brother. Donne's description of these events is very similar to his reporting of the same events in Letters No. 92, which follows this letter as my No. 94.

Donne next comments on a dispute between the Jesuits and the theologians of the Sorbonne over the respective authority of the pope and the king. Bald summarizes the conflict:

> During the months that followed the assassination of Henry IV, the Sorbonne had publicly condemned a number of the more extreme Jesuit writings upholding the papal power at the expense of the authority of kings, and in 1611 Edmund Richer, syndic of the faculty of theology and thus virtual head of the University, published his Libellus de Ecclesiastica et Politica Potestate. The book contained a bare thirty pages, but stated in highly condensed form the limitations of the pope's power. It created an immediate sensation; though the Parlement of Paris took Richer's side, an assembly of the bishops of the province under Cardinal du Perron condemned the work. Many of Richer's colleagues, lacking his hardihood, deserted him, and added their voices to those of the superior clergy. In the end Richer was removed from his office and silenced, but when Donne wrote the tide was only beginning to run strongly against him. (Life 255)

The third topic of this letter is Donne's report of the Huguenot Synod ("they of the Religion," l. 94), who, like the Catholics, were divided over points of doctrine. Donne concludes with more personal news. He queries some missing letters from Goodyer. Did Goodyer take them back from Cooke to send another way? or is Cooke lying? Donne tells Goodyer to send his letters via M^r Bruer and informs Goodyer of his travel plans.

94

[To George Garrard]

SIR,

IT is one ill Affection of a desperate debtor, that he dares not come to an account, nor take knowledge how much he owes; this makes me that I dare not tell you how manie letters I have received from you since I came to this Towne; I had three the first by the Cooke, who brought none but yours, nor ever came to me, to let me know what became of the rest: the two other of the 7. and 8. of *March*, came in a letter which Sir *H. Wotton* writ to me from *Amyens*; there is not a size of paper in the Palace, large enough to tell you how much I esteeme my selfe honoured in your remembrances; nor strong enough to wrap up a heart so ful of good affections towards you, as mine is. When any thing passes between Sir *Thomas Roe* and you, tell him I am not the lesse his Servant, for not saying so by often letters: for by my troth, I am that so much as he could desire I should be, when he began to love me. Sir *Thomas Lucies* businesse, and perchance sadness forbid me writing now. I have written to him (whilest I lived in darknesse, whether my Letters came to you or no) by another way; and if my poore Letters were any degree of service, I should doe it often, and rather be mine own Post, then leave any thing undone, to which he would give such an interpretation, as that it were an Argument of my Devotion to him. For my purpose of proceeding in the profession of the Law, so far as to a Title, you may be pleased to correct that imagination where you finde it. I ever thought the study of it my best entertainment and pastime, but I have no ambition, nor design upon the Stile. Of my Anniversaries the fault which I acknowledge in my selfe, is to have descended to print any thing in Verse, which though it have excuse, even in our times, by example of men, which one would thinke should as little have done it, as I; yet I confesse I wonder how I declined to it, and doe not pardon my self. But for the other part of the imputation, of having said so much, my defence is, that my purpose was to say as well as I could: for since I never saw the Gentlewoman, I cannot be understood to have bound my selfe to have spoken just Truth: but I would not be thought to have gone about to praise any bodie in rime, except I tooke such a Person, as might be capable of all that I could say. If any of those Ladies think that Mistris *Drury* was not so, let that Ladie make her selfe fit for all those praises in the Booke, and it shall be hers. Nothing is farther from colour or ground of Truth, then that which you write of Sir *Robert Druries* going to Masse. No man of our Nation hath been more forward to apply himselfe to the Church of the Religion where he hath come, nor to relieve their wants, where that Demonstration hath beene needfull. I know not yet whether Sir *John Brookes* purpose of being very shortly here, be not a just reason to make me forbear writing to him. I am sure that I would fainest do that in writing or abstaining which should be most acceptable to him. It were in vain to put into this letter any relation of the Magnificence which have been here at publication of these marriages; for at this time there come into *England* so many *Frenchmen*, as I am sure you shall heare all at least. If they speak not of above eight hundred horse well caparosond, you may believe it: and you may believe, that no Court in Christendome had beene able to have appeared so brave in that kinde. But if they tell you of any other stuffe, then Copper, or any other exercise of armes then running at the Quintain, and the Ring, you may be bold to say *Pardone moy*. Sir, this messenger makes so much haste that I cry you mercy for spending any time of this Letter, in other imployment, then thanking you for yours, and promising you more before my remove from hence. I pray venture no Letter to me by any other way then M. *John Bruer* at the Queens Armes a Mercer in *Cheapside*, who is always like to know where we are; And make me by loving me still, worthy to be

Your friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 92 (253-57)

Also in Gosse (I: 301-03)

Notes

l. 7 the Cooke: Bennett ("Donne's *Letters from the Continent*" 71, n. 25) suggests that "the Cooke" may be Drury's servant Bartholomew Cooke, who is mentioned in Drury's will, *PCC 98 Rudd*.

l. 11 Sir Henry Wotton: Sir Henry Wotton passed through Amyens not too long after Donne and Sir Robert Drury had moved on to Paris. They moved to Paris before March 25 (N.S.); Wotton was in Amiens briefly on and around April 7 (Bennett, "Donne's *Letters from the Continent*" 71, n. 27).

l. 18 Sir Thomas Roe: See Letter No. 186.

ll. 22-23 Sir Thomas Lucie [Lucy]: See Letter No. 100.

l. 56 Mistriss Drury: Elizabeth Drury, the deceased daughter of Sir Robert Drury, for whom Donne wrote *The Anniversaries*.

l. 61 Sir Robert Drurie [Drury]

l. 67 Sir John Brooke: the cousin of Donne's friend Christopher Brooke, who was at Lincoln's Inn with Donne. Sir John Brooke and Donne therefore knew each other, but whether they were friends or close friends is not known.

l. 93 John Bruer: See Letter No. 83.

Commentary

Letters Nos. 26, 42, 85, and 92 are closely linked for several reasons. *Letters* Nos. 85 and 92 contain a long passage that is virtually identical which makes up almost the entire body of *Letters* No. 85 and a significant portion of the much longer No. 92. All four letters evidently belong to the period of April 9 to April 14, 1611/12; their contents, however, do not clearly indicate their relationship.

I. A. Shapiro argues that *Letters* No. 92 was written to Sir Henry Goodyer, chiefly because of the passage in which Donne states that he has received at least five letters from his correspondent. Bennett, however, shows that this letter must have been written to George Garrard, not Goodyer. According to Bennett, Donne wrote to Goodyer on April 9 (*Letters* No. 42) and between one and three days later (April 10-13; *Letters* No. 26) after receiving a packet of letters from Sir Henry Wotton some time during that period. Donne also wrote to Garrard (*Letters* No. 92) at the same time as he wrote No. 26 to Goodyer, because he also received two letters in Wotton's packet from Garrard. As Bennett states, this argument assumes that No. 92 was written to Garrard even though it is not given a Reading or date in the 1651 *Letters*. Bennett clearly establishes that this letter could not have been written to Goodyer, and makes a strong case that it was written to Garrard.

Bennett suggests that No. 85 was partly made up from *Letters* No. 92, and, perhaps, from fragments of letters now lost, by the editor of the *Poems*. Since *Letters* No. 85 is headed "*To my honoured friend* G.G. *Esquire*, the heading of No. 85 is indirect evidence that No. 92 was actually written to Garrard. See also *Letters* No. 85 Commentary.

95

To my honoured friend G. G. *Esquire*
[George Garrard].

SIR,

NEither your Letters, nor silence, needs excuse; your friendship is to me an abundant possession, though you remember me but twice in a year: He that could have two harvests in that time, might justly value his land at a high rate; but, Sir, as we doe not onely then thank your land, when we gather the fruit, but acknowledge that all the year she doth many motherly offices in preparing it: so is not friendship then onely to be esteemed, when she is delivered of a Letter, or any other reall office, but in her continuall propensnesse and inclination to do it. This hath made me easie in pardoning my long silences, and in promising my self your forgivenesse for not answering your Letter sooner. For my purpose of proceeding in the profession of the law, so farre as to a title you may be pleased to correct that imagination, wheresoever you finde it. I ever thought the study of it my best entertainment, and pastime, but I have no ambition, nor designe upon the style. Of my Anniversaries, the fault that I acknowledge in my self, is to have descended to print any thing in verse, which though it have excuse even in our times, by men who professe, and practise much gravitie; yet I confesse I wonder how I declined to it, and do not pardon my self: But for the other part of the imputation of having said too much, my defece is, that my purpose was to say as well as I could: for since I never saw the Gentlewoman, I cannot be understood to have bound my self to have spoken just truths, but I would not be thought to have gone about to praise her, or any other in rime; except I took such a person, as might be capable of all that I could say. If any of those Ladies think that Mistris *Drewry* was not so, let that Lady make her self fit for all those praises in the book, and they shall be hers. Sir, this messenger makes so much haste that I cry you mercy for spending any time of this letter in other imployment then thanking you for yours. I hope before *Christmas* to see *England*, and kisse your hand, which shall ever, (if it disdain not that office) hold all the keyes of the libertie and affection, and all the faculties of

Paris the 14 of *Aprill*, here, 1612.

Your most affectionate servant,
J. D.

Source: *Letters* (237-39)

Collation

Letters: 1651, 54

Poems: 1635, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

Title: *To my honoured friend* G.G. *Esquire*: *Letters* 1651, 54 pp. 237-39
1719 pp. 241-42
To my honour'd friend G.G. Esquier: 1635, 39
To my honour'd friend G.G. Esquire: 1649
To my honored friend G.G. Esquire: 1669 pp.

SIR,] SIR. 1635-39 SIR,] 1649-69

l. 1 Letters] letters 1635-1719 silence] silece 1635

l. 2 me] mee 1635-39

l. 4 year] yeare 1635-39 He] Hee 1635

l. 7 we] wee 1635-39 doe] do 1719 onely] only 1669 1719
thank] thanke 1635-39

l. 8 we] wee 1635-39 acknowledge] acknowledg 1669 1719

l. 9 year] yeare 1635-39 she] shee 1635-39

l. 10 it:] it; 1719

l. 11	then] than 1669 onely] only 1669 1719 she] shee 1635-39
l. 12	Letter] letter 1635-1719 reall] real 1669 1719
l. 13	continuall] continual 1669 1719 propensnesse] propensness 1669 1719
l. 14	do] doe 1635-69
l. 16	self] selfe 1635-39 forgivenesse] forgiveness 1669 1719
l. 17	Letter] letter 1635-1719
l. 19	farre] far 1669 1719 title] tittle 1635 title, 1719
l. 20	imagination] imagigination 1639-54
l. 21	finde] find 1669 1719
l. 23	designe] design 1669 1719
l. 24	style] stile 1635-1719 fault] fault, 1719
l. 25	acknowledge] acknowledg 1635-69 self] selfe 1635-39
l. 27	times,] times 1649-1719
l. 28	professe] profess 1669 1719
ll. 28-29	gravitie] gravity 1649-1719
l. 29	yet] yet, 1719 confesse] confes 1669 1719
ll. 29-30	declined] declinde 1635-39 declin'd 1649-1719
l. 30	do] doe 1635-54 self;] self: 1719
l. 31	imputation] imputation, 1719
l. 32	defece] defence 1635-1719 that] That 1669 1719
l. 34	Gentlewoman] gentlewoman 1635 be] bee 1635
l. 35	self] selfe 1635-39
l. 36	truths,] truths; 1719
l. 38	rime] ryme 1649-54 took] tooke 1635-39
l. 39	all] all, 1719 say,] say: 1635-1719

l. 40	Ladies] Ladys 1719 thinke] think 1669 1719 Mistris] Mistress 1719
l. 41	*Drewry*] Drury 1719
l. 42	self] selfe 1635-39 praises] prayses 1635-39 book] booke 1635-39
l. 44	haste] haste, 1719 cry] crie 1635 crave 1719 mercy] mercy, 1669
l. 46	imployment] employment 1719 then] than 1635-39 1669 1719
l. 47	*England*] England 1635-54 and] & 1635-54
l. 48	kisse] kiss 1669 1719 ever,] ever 1719
l. 49	keyes] keys 1649-54 1719
l. 50	libertie] liberty 1649-1719
l. 52	*Paris*] Paris 1635-69 *Paris*, 1719 14] 14th 1719
l. 53	*Aprill*,] April, 1635-54 April 1669 *April* 1719 here,] here 1669 J.D.] I.D. 1635-54 1719

Commentary

This letter is addressed to G.G. (George Garrard) and is unusual in that it is dated and includes the address from which it was written (Paris, 14 April 1612 [continental style]). The striking aspect of this letter is that it shares an almost identical statement of Donne's often quoted defence for his praise of Sir Robert Drury's deceased daughter, Elizabeth, in *The Anniversaries* with *Letters* No. 92 (ll. 14-36), *Poems* No. 6 and *Letters* No. 85 (ll. 32-59), and *Letters* No. 92.

Bennett ("Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons*") suggests that letter No. 6 from the *Poems*, 1635, which also appears as *Letters* No. 85, was made up by the editor of 1635, who added a beginning and a closing from other letters now lost and who took the body from *Letters* No. 92, which is not dated or addressed. Bennett is probably correct here, but because it is possible that Donne used similar passages in letters to two different correspondents, I retain No. 85 as a separate letter. If that is the case, No. 92 was written to an as yet unidentified correspondent.

The passage duplicated in Letters Nos. 85 and 92 makes clear the displeasure other ladies felt whom he had earlier praised. The Countess of Bedford was one of these; this is indicated by Donne's verse letter to her which he never completed, which bears the subtitle "Begun in France but never perfected" (Milgate 104). For a similar sentiment about the purpose and value of praise as that expressed in this letter, see Burley MS. f.308^{v}, a much earlier letter in which Donne responds to flattery directed at him by saying that he will accept it only as something to aim toward.

96

To Sir G. F. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Writ to you once this week before; yet I write again, both because it seems a kinde of resisting of grace, to omit any commodity of sending into England, and because any Pacquet from me into England should go, not only without just fraight, but without ballast, if it had not a letter to you. In Letters that I received from Sir H. Wotton yesterday from Amyens, I had one of the 8 of March from you, and with it one from M^{rs}. Danterey, of the 28 of January: which is a strange disproportion. But Sir, if our Letters come not in due order, and so make not a certain and concurrent chain, yet if they come as Atomes, and so meet at last, by any crooked, and casuall application, they make up, and they nourish bodies of friendship; and in that fashion, I

mean one way or other, first or last, I hope all the Letters which have been addressed to us by one another, are safely arrived, except perchance that pacquet by the Cook be not, of which before this time you are cleare; for I received (as I told you) a Letter by M. Nat. Rich, and if you sent none by him; then it was that Letter, which the Cook tells you he delivered to M. Rich; which, with all my criticismes, I cannot reconcile; because in your last Letter, I find mention of things formerly written, which I have not found. However, I am yet in the same perplexity, which I mentioned before, which is, that I have received no syllable, neither from her self, nor by any other, how my wife hath passed her danger, nor do I know whether I be increased by a childe, or diminished by the losse of a wife. I hear from England of many censures of my book, of M^{ris} Drury; if any of those censures do but pardon me my descent in Printing any thing in verse, (which if they do, they are more charitable then my self; for I do not pardon my self, but confesse that I did it against my conscience, that is, against my own opinion, that I should not have done so) I doubt not but they will soon give over that other part of that indictment, which is that I have said so much; for no body can imagine, that I who never saw her, could have any other purpose in that, then that when I had received so very good testimony of her worthinesse, and was gone down to print verses, it became me to say, not what I was sure was just truth, but the best that I could conceive; for that had been a new weaknesse in me, to have praised any body in printed verses, that had not been capable of the best praise that I could give. Presently after Easter we shall (I think) go to Frankford, to be there at the election, where we shall meet Sir H. Wotton and Sir Ro. Rich, and after that we are determined to passe some time, in the Palatinate. I go thither with a great deale of devotion; for me thinkes it is a new kinde of piety, that as Pilgrims went heretofore to places which had been holy and happy, so I go to a place now, which shall be so, and more, by the presence of the worthiest Princes of the world, if that marriage proceed. I have no greater errand to the place then that at my return into *England*; I may be the fitter to stand in her presence, and that after I have seen a rich and abundant Countrey, in his best seasons, I may see that Sun which shall always keep it in that height. Howsoever we stray, if you have leasure to write at any time, adventure by no other way, then M. *Bruer*, at the Queens Armes, a Mercer, in *Cheapside*. I shall omit no opportunity, of which I doubt not to finde more then one before we go from *Paris*. Therefore give me leave to end this, in which if you did not finde the remembrance of my humblest services to my Lady *Bedford*, your love and faith ought to try all the experiments of pouders, and dryings, and waterings to discover some lines which appeared not; because it is impossible that a Letter should come from me, with such an ungratefull silence.

Your very true poor friend and
servant and lover
J. Donne.

This day begins a History, of which I doubt not but I shall write more to you before I leave this town. Monsieur de Rohan, *a person for birth, next heire to the Kingdome of* Navar, *after the Kings children, (if the King of* Spaine *were weary of it) and for allyance, sonne in law to D*. Sally, *and for breeding in the wars and estate, the most remarkable man of the Religion*, *being Governour of S*. Jean d'Angeli, *one of the most important towns which they of the Religion hold for their security, finding that some distasts between the Lieutenant and the Maior of the town, and him, were dangerously fomented by great persons, stole from Court, rode post to the town and removed these two persons*. *He sent his secretary, and another dependent of his to give the Queen satisfaction, who is so far from receiving it, that his messengers are committed to the* Bastile, *likely to be presently tortured; all his friends here commanded to their houses, and the Queens companies of light horse sent already thitherward, and foot companies preparing; which troops being sent against a place, so much concerning those of the Religion to keep, and where they abound in number and strength, cannot chuse but produce effects worthy your hearing in the next Letter*.

Source: *Letters* No. 26 (73-78)

Also in Gosse (I: 305-07)

Notes

l. 8 *Sir H. Wotton*, Donne's friend, was on a mission to the Duke of Savoy at this time (Bald, *Life* 256).

l. 11 M^{rs}. Danterey [Mrs. Dauntsey]: See Commentary.

l. 22 Cook: probably Drury's servant Bartholomew Cooke. See *Letters* No. 42.

l. 25 *Nat. Rich*.: See *Letters* No. 42.

l. 39 *M^{ris} Drury*: Elizabeth Drury, the deceased daughter of Sir Robert Drury and the subject of Donne's *Anniversaries*

l. 62 *Sir Ro. Rich*, later second Earl of Warwick: See Letters 89, 92, and 97.

ll. 68-69 the worthiest Princes[s] of the world: Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of James I. Attending her marriage to Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, was the purpose of Sir Robert Drury's trip to Germany.

l. 78 M. *Bruer*: a servant of Sir Robert Drury's

l. 85 Lady Bedford: Lucy, Countess of Bedford

ll. 95-96 *Monsieur* de Rohan: a Huguenot leader, governor of S. Jean d'Angeli

l. 99 D. Sally: Duc de Sully. See *Letter* No. 88.

l. 101 S. Jean d'Angeli: a Huguenot stronghold

l. 108 the Queen: Marie de Medicis (see also Letters No. 86, 88, 93)

Commentary

Shapiro and Bennett both date this letter around April 3/13, 1611/12. Shapiro gives no reason for his date; Bennett bases his dating on Donne's reference in this letter to receiving letters from Sir Henry

Wotton at Amiens. Bald (Life 251) describes this letter as having been written in mid-April. Bald notes that Donne's last letter written from Paris is dated 14 April (Letters No. 85) and, like this one and Letters No. 92, contains Donne's defence for writing The Anniversaries. Donne's description of his imminent departure for Frankfurt after Easter also helps date the letter in the middle of April. Both Shapiro and Bennett accept the letter as having been written to Goodyer despite its being addressed in the Letters "To Sir G.F." Donne's request that the recipient pass along greetings to the Countess of Bedford is conclusive evidence that the letter was addressed to Goodyer. Moreover, there is a reference to Donne's receiving a letter from Goodyer's landlady, whose name appears in the letter as M^rs^. Danterey, but whose name actually was Mary Dauntsey (Lady Bartlett). Donne mentions her again in Letters Nos. 31 and 91.

This letter also includes Donne's attempt to sort out which letters he has received to date, information about his future travelling plans, and, in the postscript, news of the French political situation.

97

To your selfe. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
IF this Letter finde you in a progresse, or
at Bath, or at any place of equall leasure
to our Spa, you will perchance descend to
reade so low meditations as these. Nothing
in my L. of Salisburies death exercised my
poor considerations so much, as the multi-
tude of libells. It was easily discerned, some
years before his death, that he was at a de-
fensive war, both for his honour and health,
and (as we then thought) for his estate:

and I thought, that had removed much of the envy. Besides, I have just reasons to think, that in the chiefest businesses between the Nations, he was a very good patriot. But I meant to speake of nothing but the libells, of which, all which are brought into these parts, are so tastelesse and flat, that I protest to you, I think they were made by his friends. It is not the first time that our age hath seen that are practised, That when there are witty and sharp libels made which not onely for the liberty of speaking, but for the elegancie, and composition, would take deep root, and make durable impressions in the memory, no other way hath been thought so fit to suppresse them, as to divulge some course, and railing one: for when the noise is risen, that libels are abroad, mens curiositie must be served with something: and it is better for the honour of the person traduced, that some blunt downright railings be vented, of which everybody is soon weary, then other pieces, which entertain us long with a delight, and love to the things themselves. I doubt not but he smoothered some libels against him in his life time. But I would all these (or better) had been made then, for they might then have wrought upon him; and they might have testified that the Authors had meant to mend him, but now they can have no honest pretence. I dare say to you, where I am not easily misinterpreted, that there may be cases, where one may do his Countrey good service, by libelling against a live man. For, where a man is either too great, or his Vices too generall, to be brought under a judiciary accusation, there is no way, but this extraordinary accusing, which we call Libelling And I have heard that nothing hath soupled and allayed the D. of Lerma in his violent greatnesse, so much as the often libels made upon him. But after death, it is, in all cases, unexcusable. I know that Lucifer, and one or two more of the Fathers who writ libellous books against the Emperours of their times, are excused by our writers, because they writ not in the lives of those Emperours. I am glad for them that they writ not in their lives, for that must have occasioned tumult, and contempt, against so high and Soveraign persons. But that doth not enough excuse them to me, for writing so after their death; for that was ignoble, and uselesse, though they did a little escape the nature of libels, by being subscribed and avowed: which excuse would not have served in the Star-chamber, where sealed Letters have been judged Libels; but these of which we speake at this present, are capable of no excuse, no amolishment, and therefore I cry you mercy, and my self too, for disliking them, with so much diligence, for they deserve not that. But Sir, you see by this, and by my Letter of last week, from hence the peremptory barrennesse of this place, from whence we can write nothing into England, but of that which comes from thence. Till the Lady Worster came hither, I had never heard any thing to make me imagine that Sir Rob. Rich was in England; the first hour that I had knowledge of it, I kisse his hands by this Letter. I make account to be in London, transitorily, about the end of August. You shall do me much favour, if I may finde a Letter from you (if you shall not then be there) at the Lady Bartlets: I shall come home in much ignorance, nor would I discern home by a better light, or any other then you. I can glory of nothing in this voyage, but that I have afflicted my Lady Bedford with few Letters. I protest earnestly to you, it troubles me much more to dispatch a pacquet into England, without a Letter to her, then it would to put in three. But I have been heretofore too immodest towards her, and I suffer this Purgatory for it. We make account to leave this place within 8 or 10 days, and hence to make our best haste to the Count Maurice, where we think to finde again the young Palatine: all this I tell you only because when you know, that we shall run too fast to write any more Letters, you may easily pardon the importunities and impertinencies of this, and cast into no lower place of your love

Spâ, 26 July here   Your very true friend and servant
1612.   J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 31 (89-93)

Also in Gosse (I: 312-14)

Notes

l. 1	in a progresse: with King James travelling on a state visit through the countryside as guests of the local nobility
l. 2	Bath: the fashionable English resort
l. 3	Spa: the fashionable German resort
l. 5	L. of *Salisburies* death: Salisbury died 24 May 1612.
l. 51	soupled [suppled]: softened; mollified (*O.E.D.*)
l. 52	D. of *Lerma*: the Duke of Lerma
l. 55	*Lucifer*: Lucilius Gaius, the satirist, 180-102 B.C.
l. 57	the Emperours: the Roman Emperors
l. 72	amolishment: appeasement (*O.E.D.*)
l. 80	Lady Worster: the Countess of Worcester was Elizabeth Hastings, the fourth daughter of Francis, Earl of Huntingdon (Gosse I: 314)
l. 82	Sir *Rob. Rich*: later Earl of Warwick; see also *Letters*
ll. 88-89	Lady Bartlets: See *Letters* No. 91.
l. 93	Lady *Bedford*: the Countess of Bedford
l. 101	Count *Maurice*: Count Maurice of Nassau, the uncle of Frederick, Elector of the Palatine, at The Hague
ll. 102-103	the young Palatine: Frederick

Commentary

Internal evidence shows clearly that this letter was written to Sir Henry Goodyer, not George Garrard, as Gosse indicates. Donne briefly discusses the Countess of Bedford (Goodyer was Donne's intermediary with the Countess), mentions his weekly custom of writing to Goodyer, and hopes to meet the recipient at his lodgings at Lady Bartlet's (Goodyer's landlady). Moreover, Donne spends a good portion of this letter defending Lord Salisbury from the libels that surfaced about him after his death. Goodyer was a distant relative of Salisbury's. This letter suggests that Goodyer must have at least been concerned about Salisbury's reputation even though he never received hoped-for patronage from Salisbury. The rest of the letter consists of greetings to Sir Robert Rich and Donne's further travel plans.

The letter is dated in the Letters 26 July 1612 continental style (16 July 1611/2 English style); this date would have given Donne time to hear of Lord Salisbury's death (he died 24 May 1612) and the ensuing libels.

98

To your selfe [George Garrard].

SIR,

AGE becomes nothing better then Friendship; therefore your Letters, which are every good effects of friendship, delight to be old before I receive them: for it is but a fortnight since those Letters which you sent by Captain Peter found me at Spâ; presently upon the receit, I adventured by your leave to bestow the first minutes upon this Letter to your faire Noble Sister; And because I found no voice at Spâ of any Messenger, I respited my Writing to you, till I came thus much nearer. Upon the way hither, another Letter from you overtooke me, which by my L. Chandos love to me for your sake, was sent after me to Mastricht: He came to Spâ within two houres after I went away; which I tell you to let you see, that my Fortune hath still that spitefull constancy, to bring me near my desires, and intercept me. If I should write to you any newes from this place, I should forestall mine owne

> Market, by telling you beforehand that which must make me acceptable to you at my comming. I shall sneake into London, about the end of August. In my remotest distances I did not more need your Letters then I shall then. Therefore if you shall not be then in London, I beseech you to think mee at Constantinople, and write one large Letter to be left at my Ladie Bartlets my lodging; for I shall come in extreame darknesse and ignorance, except you give me light. If Sir John Brooke be within your reach, present my humble service and thankfulnesse to him; if he be not, I am glad, that to my Conscience, which is a thousand witnesses, I have added you for one more, that I came as near as I could to doe it. I shall run so fast from this place, through Antwerpe, and some parts of Holland, that all that love which you could perchance be content to expresse by Letters if I lay still, may be more thriftily bestowed upon that one Letter, which is by your favour, to meet me, and to welcome to London
>
> Your unworthy, but very
> true Friend,
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 91 (251-53)

Also in Gosse (I: 310)

Notes

The annotations for Letters No. 62 describe the people and places mentioned in this letter, with the exception of Captain Peter, who remains unidentified.

Commentary

This letter appears to have been written on the same day as Letters No. 62. Donne includes the same news of his recent movements as in that letter and indicates in both letters that he hopes to be back in London by the end of August. If this letter was written at the same time as No. 62, it was also written in Brussels. The letter is addressed "To your selfe" in the *Letters*, but the reference to the recipient's sister indicates that the letter was written to George Garrard because Donne wrote *Letters* No. 97 to Martha Garrard c. August 1 and about two days before he left Spa (Bennett, "Donne's *Letters from the Continent*" 75). Bennett ("Donne's *Letters from the Continent*" 75, n. 39) suggests that there is probably an error in the text of the letter which refers to Donne's lodging at Lady Bartlett's as "my lodging": "the second *my* in 'at my Ladie *Bartlets* my lodging' should, perhaps, be *our*, for Donne and Garrard had their London lodgings in the same house." Bennett is mistaken here, however. The lodgings that Donne shared with Garrard were at Tincomb's on the Strand. Sir Henry Goodyer lodged at the Bartletts'. Donne apparently gave up his lodgings at Tincomb's before the trip to Europe, and made arrangements to use the Bartletts' as a mailing address while he was away and a temporary lodging on his return. See Letter No. 97 for further references to Lady Bartlett.

99

To your fair sister [Martha Garrard].

MADAM,
THe dignity, and the good fortune due
to your Letter, hath preserved a pac-
quet so well, that through *France* and
Germany it is at last come to me at *Spâ*.
This good experience makes me in despite
of contrary appearances, hope that I shall
finde some messenger for this, before I re-
move, though it be but two dayes. For,
even Miracles are but little and slight things,
when any thing which either concernes

your worthinesse is in consideration or my
valuation of it. If I faile in this hope of a
messenger, I shall not grudge to do my self
this service of bringing it into England, that
you may hear me say there, that I have
thus much profited by the honour of your
conversation, and Contemplation, that I
am, as your vertues are, every where
equall; and that, that which I shall say
then at London, I thought and subscribed
at Spâ, which is, that I will never be any
thing else, then

Your very humble and affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 97 (266)

Also in Gosse (I: 311)

Commentary

Donne indicates in this letter that he plans to leave Spa within the next two days. Bennett ("Donne's Letters from the Continent" 75) consequently dates the letter c. August 1. This letter was enclosed with Letter No. 91, which Donne wrote from Brussels, because in that letter Donne refers to an enclosed letter for the recipient's sister. For evidence that No. 91 was written to Garrard, see the commentary on that letter.

100

To my much honoured friend S^r T. Lucy [Sir Henry Goodyer].

SIR,

I Have scarce had at any time any thing so
like news to write to you, as that I am
at this Town; we came from Spâ with so
much resolution of passing by Holland. But
at Mastricht we found that the lownesse, and
slacknesse of the River, would incommo-

date us so much, as we charged our whole gests, and came hither by Land. In the way at Lovaine we met the E. of Arondel, to recompense the losse wee had of missing my L. Chandis and his company, who came to Spâ within a few hours after we came away. Sir Ed. Conaway, by occasion of his bodies indisposition, was gone home before: he told me he had some hope of you about Bartholomewtide: But because I half understood by a Letter from you, that you were determined upon the Countrie till Michaelmas, I am not so earnest in endevouring to prolong our stay in these parts, as otherwise I should. If I could joine with him in that hope of seeing you on this side the water; and if you should hold that purpose of comming at that time, I should repent extremely my laying of our journies; for (if we should by miracle hold any resolution) we should be in England about that time, so that I might misse you both here, and there. Sir, our greatest businesse is more in our power then the least, and we may be surer to meet in heaven then in any place upon earth; and whilst we are distant here, we may meet as often as we list in Gods presence, by soliciting in our prayers for one another. I received 4 Letters from you at Spâ by long circuits. In the last, one from my L. Dorset: I, who had a conscience of mine own unworthinesse of any favour from him, could not chuse but present my thanks for the least. I do not therefore repent my forwardnesse in that office; and I beseech you not to repent your part therein. Since we came to this Town, there arrived an Extraordinary from Spain, with a reconfirmation of the D. d'Aumals Pension, which is thereby 2400^{l} a year, & he brings the title of Count, to Rodrigo de Calderon, who from a very low place, having grown to be Secretary to Lerma, is now Ambassador here, and in great opinion of wisdome: They say yet he goes to Prague with the Marquis Spinola, and the G. Buquoy, to congratulate the Emperour: but we all conclude here, that persons of such quality, being great in matter of Warre, are not sent for so small an emploiment: we beleeve certainly, that they deliberate a Warre, and that the reduction of Aix being not worthy this diligence, their intentions must be upon Cleve, for the new Town which the two Princes make by Collen, despites them much. The Elector of Ments hath lately been here, upon pretence of comming in devotion to Sichem, and shortly the Electors of Colein and Saxony are to be here severally: all concurs to a disposition of such a Warre, and the Landsgrave of Hasse (who is as yet in the Union) is much solicited and caressed by this party, and I doubt, will prove a frail and corruptible man. I durst think confidently, that they will at least proceed so far towards a Warre, as to try how France will dispose it self in the businesse: for it is conceived that the D. of Bovillon brought to our K. good assurances from the Qu. Regent, that she would pursue all her husbands purposes in advancing the designes of those Princes who are in possession of Cleve, and in the Union. If she declare her self to do so, when they stirre, they are like to divert their purposes; but if she stand but neutrall (as it is likely, considering how Spanish the Court is at this time) I see not that the Princes of the Union are much likely to retard them. Sir, you see what unconcerning things I am fain to write of, lest I should write of my self, who am so little a history or tale, that I should not hold out to make a Letter long enough to send over a Sea to you; for I should dispatch my self in this one word that I am

Aug. 16 here. Your affectionate servant and lover
1612. J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 62 (187-90)

Also in Gosse (I: 314-16)

Notes

1. 3	Spâ: a fashionable resort
1. 5	Mastricht: a town on the Dutch border
1. 9	Lovaine [Lovain]: a town near Brussels, the site of a Jesuit college with a number of English Jesuits in residence

E. of Arondel [Earl of Arundel]: Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel and Surrey

l. 11 L. Chandis [Lord Chandos] had married Anne, the eldest daughter of the Countess of Derby and the stepdaughter of Sir Thomas Egerton, in 1608. Also see the Commentary for Letter No. 101.

l. 13 Sir Edward Conaway [Conway], later Secretary of State

l. 16 Bartholomewtide: the festival of Bartholomew, one of 12 apostles, held on 24 August (old style)

l. 19 Michaelmas: the feast of St. Michael's, 29 September (old style), now 12 October, an English quarter-day

l. 37 L. Dorset: Richard Sackville, third Earl of Dorset, grandson of Thomas Sackville, co-author of Gorbuduc. Donne was also friends with his brother Edward, who became the fourth Earl (Gosse I: 316).

l. 45 D. d'Aumals: Charles, duc d'Aumale, was a cousin of Henri Guise, and in 1584 the Guise family had signed the Treaty of Joinville with Spain to maintain the family position as rivals for the French crown and also to protect Catholicism in Spain. Donne's reference suggests that close relations continued between Spain and the Guise family.

l. 47 Roderigo de Calderon: Spanish Ambassador to the Spanish Netherlands

l. 49 Lerma: the Duke of Lerma, the chief minister to Philip III of Spain

ll. 50-51 Marquis Spinola: a Spanish general who later (in 1620) led the invasion of the Palatinate after Frederick had assumed the Crown of Bohemia

l. 52 the Emperour: the Emperor Matthias, head of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Bohemia (Akrigg 334-35)

l. 58 *Cleve* [Cleves]

l. 60 *Collen* [Cologne]

l. 61 *Ments*: Mainz

ll. 63-64 the Electors of *Colein* and *Saxony*: The elector of Saxony was one of three Protestant Electors of the Empire. The other two were Frederick, the Elector of the Rhine, and the Elector of Brandenburg.

l. 66 the *Landsgrave of Hasse*: Landsgrave Maurice of Hesse-Cassel, one of the members of the Protestant Union that elected Frederick IV, Elector of the Palatinate, as the director of the Union

ll. 74-75 Qu. Regent: Anne of Austria

l. 78 the Union: the union of Protestant states in Europe

Commentary

Bennett, in "Donne's *Letters from the Continent*," identifies this as a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer and points out that there are four other letters in the 1651 *Letters* addressed to Sir Thomas Lucy and that all of them were actually written to Sir Henry Goodyer:

> They are: No. 74 (pp. 208-210; Gosse, II, 117-118), the recipient of which is identified by a reference to Polesworth, Goodere's estate; No. 79 (pp. 222-225; Gosse, II, 126-227), which contains a reference to "your son in law," best explained as an allusion to Goodere's son-in-law, Sir Francis Nethersole, as well as an apparent reference to the Countess of Bedford of the kind which is found in the letters to Goodere; No. 66

> (pp. 199-200; Gosse, II, 150-151), which is linked with No. 81 (pp. 226-227; Gosse, II, 152) to Goodere, by an inquiry about his "little book of Cases"; and No. 6 (pp. 11-19; Gosse, I, 173-77), which from its content appears to be one of several of Donne's efforts to encourage Goodere to be constant in his religion. On Nos. 79 and 66 see G. C. Moore Smith, "Donniana," Modern Language Review, VIII (1913), 49. On No. 79 see Gosse, II, 125, and Merrill, pp. 305f. (75-76, n. 40)

Bennett's view that Goodyer was the recipient of all of these letters was questioned by Bald. See my commentaries on each of these letters for discussions of their dates and the identity of the recipient.

Letters No. 62, which we are discussing here, was, according to Bennett, probably changed to Sir Thomas Lucy as part of Donne the younger's aim of complimenting Bridget Dunch, "the dedicatee of the volume and Sir Thomas Lucy's niece" (76). Gosse (I: 316), Bennett (76) and Bald (Life 260) all state that this letter was written from Brussels. Donne's letter states that his party travelled from Mastricht overland by way of Lovaine on their way. In "this Town" from which Donne writes, he describes the arrival of an Extraordinary Ambassador from Spain and the comings and goings of the Electors of Mentz, Cologne, and Saxony. Hence, "this Town" must be Brussels, the site of the court of the Archduke Albert (the Regent of the Spanish Netherlands). The date of this letter which is contained in the closing is entirely consistent with other dates and places of Donne's return journey to England.

Approximately the first third of the letter deals with incidental news about Donne's travels (who he had met and the letters he had received) and Donne's anxiousness to return to England. The remainder of the letter deals with the prospect of a war to be begun by Spain with the objective of gaining control of Cleves.

101

[To Sir Henry Goodyer?]

S^{r}

I have received yo^{r} Letter by M^{r}: Lakeryte wth more dilligence in excusing the not-delivery of it wth his owne hands then I am worthie. But I loose also the honor of kysing his hand by goeing to him, because his Messenger tells me that he goes this day out of Towne. Such ambitons especially in soo slow a pased fortune; as mine, have ever delayes. But I am abundantly recompensed, by having had occasion, by receyte of another paquett from you, some houres after yo^{r} former Letter, to present my service to my L. Chandis, of whome I received a promise that he would send Letters to me tyme enough to make mine acceptable by ushering them: and, I hope, they come wth this, By his favour, I saw, your Ellegy, at least I see not how yo^{r} absence from home can be excusable otherwise then by an Epithalamion. I speake in as much earnest as if it were matter of prose. If Mademoiselle Isabelle will make one, the first _______ I make in heaven shalbe of her sister Clifton. I am sorry my muse was past children before this occasion. Before we departe farr from the consideraton of this dead Lady, who begins but now to live in me, by this celebracon I must tell you that you have lost againe, a second tyme a very worthy frind who had so much worthyness to be lost all at once: a gentleman whome in good faith, I ever loued well, out of those things w^{ch} were wthin my comprehenson w^{ch} were his witt, and applyablenes; but, since his death, I heare of one exercise of his judgment which I knew not before, w^{ch} is that he loued not mee. This is Mr. Mathew of whose death, I had knowledg enough to make me think him dead some weekes since. But because I finde that my L Chandos hath received from gentlemen interested in M^{r} Mathews friendship other assurances thereof, I dare now tell it you, he is said to have given all his estate to M^{r} Gage, and that is said to be 7000£ w^{ch} gentleman hath since lost one of his eyes, w^{ch} I [mention as a losse of w^{ch} I am sensable, and compassionate. Mr. Gerard, if he had had more warning, would have writt to you this weeke. Next week he will tell you, that one Swinburne a Clarke apperteyning to S^{r} H. Ffanshaw, upon wensday last past put on a resolution to play, and pursued it 3 or 4 dayes. and vpon Satterday, in 3 houres lost at the Tunns 1000£, and went home to bed, and dyed. I spoke wth some that were present at his openinge, and the physician pronounced him poysoned; but they think it to be receyved before his losse. No near.

Source: Anderdon MSS., also in Gosse (I: 309-10); now in the possession of Roger Barrett, Chicago.

Textual Notes

This letter appears to be continued on the next page, which is no longer attached.

This is one of the letters from the "Anderdon MSS," as Gosse describes them. They are copies of five of Donne's letters on two folio leaves originally conjoined. One leaf of this MS formerly owned by Miss Mary Donne of Chester is now at St. Paul's Cathedral (Donne file in safe) (Beal 244). The letters on this sheet are Gosse I: 109; II: 16; and II: 206. The other leaf, in the collection of Roger Barrett of Chicago, contains Gosse I: 309, and II: 33. See the Textual Introduction for more information.

Commentary

Lord Chandos was Grey Bridges, fifth Lord Chandos of Sudeley. He was married to Anne, the eldest of the Countess of Derby's three daughters. The Countess of Derby was Sir Thomas Egerton's third wife and had married him while Donne was still in his service. Lady Chandos's youngest sister was the Countess of Huntington, to whom Donne addressed two verse letters. Sir Henry Goodyer had first acted as an intermediary between Donne and the Countess of Huntington in 1608 and he is the person most likely to have written the letter to which Donne refers that has informed him about the arrival of Lord Chandos to "this town." In a letter of August 16 written to George Garrard, Donne writes of missing Lord Chandos at Spa by two hours; Donne and the Drurys had left shortly before Chandos's arrival, but Donne adds that Chandos forwarded Garrard's letters to Maastricht. The 16 August letter to Garrard appears to contradict this letter, which states that Donne was able to meet Lord

Chandos and hoped to send letters from Lord Chandos to Goodyer along with his own. It is possible that Donne met Chandos after the 16 August letter to Garrard. The letter supplies internal evidence of a meeting with Chandos because Donne speaks of discussing the provisions of Sir Toby Mathew's will. Goodyer would have been particularly interested in Mathew's will because he was shielding some of Mathew's property from the Crown, property from which the revenues would otherwise be forfeit due to Mathew's recusancy. Despite the assurance of Lord Chandos's sources, Mathew did not die in the summer of 1612. George Garrard, mentioned in the last paragraph of the fragment, was a mutual friend and correspondent of Donne and Goodyer.

102

To my Honoured friend M^{r} George Gerrard.

SIR,

I Cannot chuse but make it a presage that I shall have no good fortune in England, that I mist the honour of enjoying that company, which you brought to town. But I beseech you let my ill luck determine in that ominousnesse: for if my not comming should be by her or you interpreted for a negligence or coldnesse in me, I were already in actuall and present affliction. For that Ecclesiasticall Lady of whom you write, since I presume it is a work of darknesse that you go about, we will deferre it for winter. Perchance the cold weather, may be as good physique to you, as she, for quenching you. I have changed my purpose of going to Windsor, and will go directly into the Wight: which I tell you not as a concerning thing, but in obedi-

ence to your commandement, as one
poor testimony that I am
Your affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 93 (258-59)

Also in Gosse (II: 12)

Commentary

Bennett dates this letter as having been written in early September 1612 because Donne indicates in Letters Nos. 62 and 91 that he hoped to be back in London by the end of August. Donne's statement that he had decided not to go to the court at Windsor, but to go directly to the Isle of Wight where his family was staying, indicates that he had only recently returned from his travels in Europe with Sir Robert Drury.

The references to the ladies in this letter are obscure. Garrard was attached to the household of Prince Henry at this time. He was, perhaps, escorting his sister Martha Garrard to London. The "Ecclesiasticall Lady" appears to be a married woman or a woman in some way inappropriate with whom Garrard is in love. Could it be Ann Overall, wife of Bishop Overall, who was reputed to be one of the most beautiful women in England and who was the center of a number of scandals because of her infidelities to her husband (Akrigg 242)?

103

To Sir Henry Goodere.

SIR,
I Speak to you before God, I am so much
affected with yesterdaies accident, that I
think I prophane it in that name. As men

> which judge Nativities, consider not single Starres, but the Aspects, the concurrence and posture of them; so in this, though no particular past arrest me, or divert me, yet all seems remarkable and enormous. God, which hath done this immediately, without so much as a sickness, will also immediately without supplement of friends, infuse his Spirit of comfort, where it is needed and deserved. I write this to you from the Spring Garden, whither I withdrew my self to think of this; and the intensenesse of my thinking ends in this, that by my help Gods work should be imperfected, if by any means I resisted the amasement.
>
> Your very true friend
> J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 71 (205)

Also in Gosse (II: 372; Appendix D)

Commentary

This letter appears to indicate a calamitous event, most likely the sudden death of someone known to Donne and Goodyer. Donne's comparison of the astrological significance of stars at someone's birth with the events preceding the incident he is discussing is a commonplace comparison to indicate the effect of fortune on men's lives. That the person Donne is describing is either dead or seriously ill is suggested by Donne's remark that no sickness preceded the incident, and that God will comfort the subject's friends. Donne's statement that he withdrew to the Spring Garden may be a reference to the Countess of Bedford's garden at Twickenham. Donne's poem "Twickenham Garden" begins

> Blasted with signs and surrounded with teares,
> Hither I come to seeke the spring.

If Donne's reference is to Twickenham Garden, the letter would have been written between 1607 and 1618, the period of the Countess's residence there. A number of people who were close to the Countess died at Twickenham, including Lady Markham, Mistress Bolstrode, and Lord Harrington, the Countess's brother. None of these deaths, however, occurred suddenly without a previous illness. The Countess, herself, suffered a serious illness in 1612, and it may be this illness that Donne refers to. One other misfortune affected the Countess of Bedford while she was at Twickenham. Her husband the Earl of Bedford was thrown from his horse and partially paralyzed. This event also occurred in 1612.

1613

104

To your selfe. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

SIr Germander Pool, your noble friend and fellow in Armes, hath been at this house. I finde by their diligent inquiring from me, that he hath assured them that he hath much advanced your proceeding, by his resignation; but cooled them again with this, that the L. Spencer pretends in his room. I never feared his, nor any mans diligence in that; I feared onely your remisnesse, because you have a fortune that can endure, and a nature that can almost be content to misse. But I had rather you exercised your Philosophy and evennesse in some things else. He doth not nothing which falls cleanly and harmelesly; but he wrastles better which stands. I know you can easily forgive your self any negligences and slacknesses, but I am glad that you are ingaged to so many friends, who either by your self, or fame have knowledge of it. In all the rest of them there is a worthinesse, and in me a love which deserves to be satisfied. In this therefore, as you are forward in all things else, be content to do more for your friends then you would for your self; endevour it, that is effect it.

Tuesday. Your very true friend and lover
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 37 (112-13)

Also in Gosse (II: 14)

Commentary

Sir Germander Poole [Jermyn Pool] attacked a man named Hutchinson and cut off three of his fingers. Hutchinson, unable to draw his sword, got Poole down and bit off a large part of his nose and carried it away in his pocket. The incident was recorded by John Chamberlain in a letter written at the end of February 1613 (Akrigg 250). Gosse (II: 14) thinks Donne's reference to Poole as Goodyer's "fellow in Armes" is a reference to this incident, and therefore dates the letter 1613. That the letter was written to Goodyer is almost certain, because it characteristically exhorts him to be more forward in pursuing his own interests. It was also written on a Tuesday, Donne's regular day for writing to Goodyer.

105

[To Sir Robert Harley]

S^{r}
I could almost be content to be desperate of seeinge
yo^{w}, while I ame in thys Country, if I might hope well
of yo^{r} health. The Conversation of thys Noble gentleman,
who refuses mee not in hys house, recompences the want
of any company: but my sensiblenes of any frinds sick-
nes, ys encreasd by the healthfullnes of thys place.
for I thinke if Bellarmine knew what immortality
dwells here, he would looke yt hys Enoch and Elias
should come out of thys Castle, to ~~finde~~ [fight] against hys
Anti christ . But, S^{r}, as I was wyllinge to make
this paper a little bigger than a physicians Receit,
lest y^{t} rep^{r}sentation should take yor stomake from
yt, so I wyll auoyd to make yt very longe, or busy,
least y^{e} physician chide mee as much as y^{e} patient
would haue donne. I shall therfor onely say, that, w^{ch}
If I were goinge to my grave, should be the honorablest
peece of my Epitaph, that I ame
Yo^{r} humble and affec-
tionate servant
J: DONNE
Montgommery. 7. Apr:
16i3.

Source: British Library Loan MS 29/202, f. 131 (Beal No. 15)

Other transcriptions: Hayward (464-65)

Notes

physicians receit: i.e., prescription

Commentary

The letter was written from Montgomery Castle, a seat of the Herbert family, where Donne was a guest of "thys Noble gentleman," Sir Edward Herbert, in 1613. The letter was written to Sir Robert Harley, a neighbor of Sir Edward Herbert's whose wife was a cousin of Herbert's and whom Donne probably knew through the Herberts (Bald, Life 185). A number of Donne's poems are connected with different members of the Herbert family and with the castle itself. Donne's "The Primrose" is associated with Montgomery Castle by its title in some versions: "The Primrose, being at Montgomery Castle upon the hill, on which it is situate." Another poem of Donne's, "Good friday, 1613. Riding Westward," was written during the same visit as this letter to Sir Robert Harley. Bellarmine was a Cardinal and Catholic apologist and catechist whom Donne believed was the "best defender of the Roman cause" (Walton, Lives 25-26). Bellarmine taught the English Jesuits Garnet, Southwell and Oldcorne and specialized in addressing students who expected to return to the Protestant countries from which they had come and face "the full force of Protestant argument against the doctrines and practices of the Roman church" (Bald 69). Bellarmine also participated directly in the controversy with King James by condemning the English Oath of Allegiance. Donne knew Bellarmine's work well and wrote Pseudo-Martyr in defence of the Oath of Allegiance.

Donne's use of various conceits concerning his own death and/or his Epitaph also appears in the verse letter "Epitaph on Himselfe" and a number of other poems and letters. It seems to suggest to Donne the ring of truth attributed to deathbed confessions and parallels the link between death and sincerity in the children's expression "Cross my heart and hope to die."

106

To my Honoured friend M. George Gherard,
over against Salisbury house.

SIR,

I Do not make account that I am come to London, when I get within the wall: that which makes it London is the meeting of friends. I cannot therefore otherwise bid my self welcome to London, then by seeking of you, which both Sir H. Goodere and I do, with so much diligence, as that this messenger comes two dayes before to intreat you from us both, to reserve your self upon Saterday: so that I may, at our coming to London that night, understand at my house where I may send you word of our supping place that night, and have the honour of your company. So you lay more obligations upon

Your poor unprofitable servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 109 (285)

Also in Gosse (II: 172)

Commentary

This letter was apparently written by Donne to Garrard during a visit to Sir Henry Goodyer's estate at Polesworth. It is not known how many times Donne visited Goodyer at Polesworth. One visit occurred during March and April 1613, as a variant title of the poem "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward" indicates. The variant title is "Mr. J. Dunn goeinge from Sir H.G. on good fryday sent him back this meditation, on the Waye" (see Bald 270). Donne also suggests in Letters No. 74, written to Goodyer on 22 December 1617, that he will try to visit him at Polesworth during the following spring. By 1611 Goodyer was living at Polesworth as much as possible to cut down on expenses. While other visits and other dates are possible, the spring of 1613 appears most likely from the limited information available. That the letter could not have been written earlier than September 1612 is certain, because Donne mentions his house in London, and he did not reside in a house in London until then, when he moved his family into a house of Sir Robert Drury's after their trip to the Continent together.

107

A Letter from Doctor Donne, to the Lord Hay.

My Lord,

I Have told your Lordship often, that I have no vertue but modesty; and I begin to fear, that I lose that, in saying so often, that I have it: At least, if I were full freighted with it before, I find, that at this time, I make a desperate shipwrack of it. Either the boldnesse of putting my self by this way of Letter into my Lord of Rochester's presence, or the boldnesse of begging from your Lordship the favour of presenting it, would spend more of that vertue than I have. But since I can stronglie hope, out of the generall testimonies of his Lordship's true noblenesse, that he will allow me this interpretation, that I reserved my self till now, when a resolution of a new course of life, and new profession, makes me a little more worthie of his knowledge; and that as soon as I had delivered my self over to God, I deliver my self to him, I cannot doubt of your Lordship's pardon for my boldnesse, in using your mediation; I did it not, my Lord, without some disputation. But I thought it verie un-

> worthie, to have sent a first Letter to his Lordship, by a servant of my own, and to have made it the businesse of anie friend of mine, who hath the honour of accesses to him. I thought my self tied by that, to have communicated my purposes with him, that person, and so to have fore-acquainted another with that, which I desire his Lordship should first know. For, I make account, that it is in one instant, that I tell his and your Lordship, that I have brought all my distractions together, and find them in a resolution, of making Divinity my Profession, that I may try, whether my poor Studies, which have profited me nothing, may profit others in that course; in which also a fortune may either be better made, or, at least, better missed, than in anie other. One good fruit of it will be, that my prayers for your Lordship's happinesse shall be, in that station, more effectuall with God; and that, therein, I shall best shew my self, to be your Lordship's most humble and thankfull servant.

Source: T.M.C. No. 181 (321)

Also in Gosse (II: 21)

Commentary

This letter was sent to Lord Hay as the covering letter for one that Hay was to deliver to Rochester (Sir Robert Ker) on Donne's behalf. (The letter to Rochester immediately precedes this letter in the Tobie Mathews Collection.) The letters obviously belong together because both deal with Donne's first approach to Rochester asking for patronage.

108

A Letter from Doctor Donne, to the same Lord of Rochester, of the same kind.

My Lord,

I May justly fear, that your Lordship hath never heard of the name, which lies at the bottom of this Letter: nor could I come to the boldnesse of presenting it now, without another boldnesse, of putting his Lordship, who now delivers it, to that office. Yet I have (or flatter my self to have) just excuses of this, and just ground of that ambition. For, having obeyed at last, after much debatement within me, the Inspirations (as I hope) of the Spirit of God, and resolved to make my Profession Divinitie: I make account, that I do but tell your Lordship, what God hath told me, which is, That it is in this course, if in any, that my service may be of use to this Church and State. Since then your Lordship's vertues have made you so near the head in the one, and so religious a Member of the other, I came to this courage, of thrusting my self thus into your Lordship's presence, both in respect that I was an independent, and disobliged man, towards any other person in this State; and delivered over now, (in my resolution) to be a houshold-servant of God. I humbly beseech your Lordship, that since these my purposes are likelie, to meet quicklie a false and unprofitable dignitie, which is, the envie of others, you will vouchsafe to undertake, or prevent, or disable that, by affording then the true dignitie of your just interpretations, and favourable assistance. And to receive into your knowledge so much of the History, and into your protection so much of the endeavours, of your Lordships most humble and devoted servant.

Source: T.M.C. No. 180 (319)

Also in Gosse (II: 20, 21); Bald (272-73)

Commentary

This is Donne's first letter to Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester, and was delivered to him by Donne's friend James Hay, Earl of Carlisle (see Letters No. 148). Bald (Donne and the Drurys 125) dates this letter spring 1613. Gosse (II: 20) dates this letter October 1612.

The death of the Earl of Salisbury in 1612 meant a change in the power structure of the court. The Howards were now the most powerful faction at court and were allying themselves with Viscount Rochester, the King's favorite, by using his infatuation with the Countess of Essex (a Howard). Prince Henry, who also died in 1612, opposed Rochester's influence, but after Prince Henry's death Rochester was opposed only by a small group, of whom the most prominent were the Earl of Pembroke (a cousin of the Herberts, with whom Donne was friendly), and the Countess of Bedford (Bald, Life 122). Donne was thus offering his services to the enemy of his long-time patroness, the Countess of Bedford. Bald (Life 272-73) implies that Donne's letter was deliberately timed to take advantage of Somerset's split with Sir Thomas Overbury, who helped Somerset with his court business and on whom Somerset depended to handle his correspondence. Overbury, through Somerset's manipulations, was committed to the Tower on a trumped-up charge on 26 April 1613.

109

To M^rs^ Martha Garet. [Martha Garrard] [1613?]

MADAME,

THough there be much merit, in the fa-
vour your brother hath done me in a
visit, yet that which doth enrich and per-
fect it, is, that he brought you with him;

which he doth, as well by letting me see
how you do, as by giving me occasions, and
leave to talk with you by this Letter: if you
have any servant, which wishes you better
then I, it must be because he is able to put
his wishes into a better frame, and expresse
them better, and understand proportion,
and greatnesse better then I. I am willing
to confesse my impotencie; which is, that
I know no wish good enough for you; if
any doe, my advantage is, that I can exceed
his, by adding mine to it. You must not
think that I begin to think thus, when you
begin to hear it, by a Letter; As sometimes
by the changing of the winde, you begin to
hear a Trumpet, which sounded long before you heard it; so are these thoughts
of you familiar and ordinary in me,
though they have seldome the help of
this conveyance to your knowledge: I am
loth to leave; for as long as in any fashion,
I can have your brother and you here, you
make my house a kinde of Dorvey; but
since I cannot stay you here, I will come
thither to you; which I do, by wrapping up
in this paper, the heart of

Your most affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 15 (40-41)

Also in Gosse (II: 17)

Notes

Dorvey [Dorney]: Dorvey is a misprint for Dorney, the seat of the Garrards in Buckinghamshire (Gosse II: 18).

Commentary

This letter is placed among others in 1613 by Gosse. Keynes (137) and Hester (xx) also date the letter 1613. There is no internal evidence for the date of the letter, which appears to have been deduced from the number of letters written to George Garrard at this time and from the fact that Donne wrote another letter to Martha Garrard from Spa in 1612 (Gosse II: 14; Bald, Life 278).

110

[To Sir Henry Goodyer]

S^{r}

Except Demonstrations, (and perchance there are very few of them) I finde nothing wthout perplexityes. I am growne more sensable of it by busying my selfe a litle in the search of the easterne tongues, where a perpetuall perplexity in the words, cannot choose but cast a perplexity vpon the things. even the least of our actions suffer-and tayst thereof. for this present reclusednes of myne hath thus much perplexity in it, that I should the raither write because of it, since it gives me more then ordenary leasure, and the rayther forbeare, because it takes from me the knowledge of things worth the wrighting to you. I dined yesterday on the King's side at Paul's. but where there came in soe many of the Queens kinred that the house was more troubled wth them, then this kingdome was wth the Queen's kindred, when yo^{r} Ancestresse the La: Gray conquerd Edw:4. There was Father, Mother, 2 brothers, 4 sisters, & miserable I: Yet there was found tyme to aske me where you were, and to protest that shee did not know you were gone out of Towne because you were soe equall a Strainger there, in, and out of Towne. I did yo^{r} Commandement wth M^{r} Johnson, both our interests in him needed not to have been ymployed in it. There was nothing obnoxious, but the very name, and he hath Chainged that. If vpon haveing read it before to diverse, it should be spoken that that person was concernd in it, he sees not how M^{r} Holland even a apprehendes it wilbe excused in it. for he protests that no hearer but M^{r} Holland ever apprehended it soe. My Lo: of Bedford I heare, had lately a desperate fall from his horse, and was speechless all Tuesday last, his La: rode away hastely from Twicknam to him, but I heare noe more yet of him. And thus longe, S^{r} whilst I have beene talkeing of others, meethinkes I have opened a casement to gaze upon passengers. w^{ch} I love not much, though it might seeme a recreacon to such as I, who have theire houses, that is themselves soe narrow and yll furnished, yet I can be contentd to looke inwards vpon my selfe, if, for no other obiect, yet because I finde yo^{r} name, and fortunes, and contentment in the best room of me, and that noe disease or impotency in my fortune nor my close Imprisonement takes from me the dignity of beinge

Yo^{r} very Affectionate
Servant
JO: DONNE:

From my Hospitall
Julÿ 17: 1613.

Source: St. Paul's Cathedral (Anderdon MS.); also in Gosse (II: 16-17)

Textual Notes

This is one of the letters from the "Anderdon MSS," as Gosse describes them. They are copies of five of Donne's letters on two folio leaves originally conjoined. One leaf of this MS formerly owned by Miss Mary Donne of Chester is now at St. Paul's Cathedral (Donne file in safe) (Beal 244). The letters on this sheet are Gosse I: 109; II: 16-17; and II: 206. The other leaf, in the collection of Roger Barrett of Chicago, contains Gosse I: 309-10, and II: 33. See the Textual Introduction for more information.

Notes

1. 1 Demonstrations: manifestations, exhibitions, examples (O.E.D.). Donne probably means things in contrast to words which represent things.

Commentary

Donne's opening discussion of his interest in Eastern tongues must refer (at least in part) to his study of Hebrew. In a letter of 14 March 1614 to Goodyer, Donne concludes by explaining that "D. Layfield" has arrived to see him. Bald (Life 281) concludes that they were studying Hebrew together; Layfield was an excellent Hebraist and was one of the churchmen who participated in the revision of the Pentateuch for the King James Bible (see also the Commentary for Letter No. 126). Donne's comments about his awareness of the "perplexity" of things derived from the "perplexities" of words is consistent with the love of paradox evident both in his "Paradoxes" and in all other forms of his writing. Donne's interest in paradox, which is part of his metaphysical interest in essence and substance, was, no doubt, engaged in his study of Hebrew. His comments about Hebrew are thus to be taken as positive ones. Donne proceeds to discuss dining with John King, Bishop of London. "The Queen" was a familiar reference to the Bishop's wife (see R. E. Bennett, "Donne and the Queen" 697). Bennett identifies the Bishop's wife as Joan, daughter of Henry Freeman of Henley-on-Thames, and notes that the family "was numerous" and included several inn-keepers: Henry Freeman had an inn at Henley around 1586 and "Rice" Freeman was the proprietor of the Red Lion in 1621 (John Southerden Burn, A History of Henley-on-Thames). This information is of interest because Donne wrote a letter to Sir Robert Ker from the Red Lion Inn (see Letter No. 157) and another letter by Donne to Ker implies that it was also written from an inn (Letter No. 132). Donne may have been in the habit of waiting upon Ker at the Red Lion until it was convenient for Ker to see him.

In this same article Bennett shows that Sir Henry Goodyer must have been the recipient of the letter because he believed himself descended from Lady Grey:

> In a letter preserved among the papers of Lord Sackville at Knole . . . Goodere tells the Duke of Buckingham that he can claim descent through his great-grandfather, Sir Thomas Hawte, from Woodville, Earl Rivers. Goodere was not quite accurate; although he was descended from the Woodvilles, it was not from Richard Woodville, first Earl Rivers, father of Elizabeth, Lady Grey, and consort of Edward IV (see "The Visitation of Kent 1619-21, Harleian Society, XLII, page 213); but he evidently thought that he was, and it is most likely, therefore, that this letter of Donne's was addressed to him.

Bald (Life 157) explains the reference to a conflict between Ben

Jonson and Hugh Holland that comprises the second paragraph of this letter:

> The key is to be found in a passage in Selden's Table Talk: 'Ben Jonson Satirically expressed the vain Disputes of Divines by Inigo Lanthorn, disputing with his Puppet in a Bartholomew Fair. It is so; It is not so; It is so; It is not so; crying thus to one another a quarter of an hour together.' Selden's reference is to the dispute between the puppet, manipulated by Lantern Leatherhead, and Zeal-of-the-land Busy in Act V, scene v of Bartholomew Fair. Selden, who was a close friend of Jonson, had no doubt heard the play read in its original form, and has recalled the name originally given to the character. Inigo Jones's friends [i.e., Hugh Holland] were the ones who had taken offence; Donne and Goodyer both intervened on his behalf. But Donne remarked, 'There was nothing obnoxious, but the very name, and he hath Chaunged that', indicating he saw no cause for offence in the play as it has come down to us.

In the third and final paragraph of this letter, Donne informs Goodyer of the Earl of Bedford's fall from his horse; he was paralyzed permanently. His "lady," of course, refers to the Countess of Bedford, who lived at Twickenham from 1608 to 1617. The Earl of Bedford remained at his estate of Chenies. Donne closes the letter with a graceful deprecation of the importance of his news compared to Goodyer's place in his thoughts.

111

A Letter from J.D. to the Lord of Rochester. It consists of severall matters, with much kindenesse.

My most honoured Lord,

I Prosper too fast in your Lordship's favour, that I am alreadie come to the honour of suffering somewhat for it; For this abstinence from putting my selfe into your Lordship's presence (which I make account that I do in obedience of your purposes) is so much more than a punishment to me, that it hath some degrees of a civill martyrdome: But as God himself, so they whom he hath made Stewards of his benefits upon Earth, dispences and conferres them, as well by providence, as by presence. So that with as much confidence, as humility, I do rest my selfe upon your gracious inclinations towards me, and think my selfe much safer in that, then in the possession of any place. For when by possession, I must come to exercise mine own poor abilities, I shall not be upon so good ground, as now, when I subsist onely by your Grace, yet I presume your Lordship will allow me to tell you, that I understand that S.H.W. hath some design upon one of these places, whereof your Lordship did me that favour to speak for a nephew of his M.M. But as they are now supplied, I dare be sure that there is room for none, but one of your making; This day and not before I came to the sight of the book, which your Lordship mentioned to me; but because I know that the Jesuites at *Lovaine* are in hand with an answer expreslie to my whole book, I forbear yet to take knowledge of this. Which I am bold to tell your Lordship, least in such place, such mis-conceiving, might disadvantage me much. I should be thought to forsake, either mine own poor reputation, or the safest cause in the World. But least, I should spend all your Lordship's favour in pardons, I will take no more of your time, neither from your self, nor the publique with these impertinencies of,

Your Lordship's, &c.

Source: *TMC* No. 178 (316)

Also in Gosse (II: 28, 29)

Commentary

Donne's patronage by Lord Rochester (made Earl of Somerset for his marriage to Lady Francis Howard on 26 December 1613) began in the Spring of 1613 (see *T.M.C.* Letter No. 180). The opening lines of the letter under discussion here indicate that Donne's association with Somerset was still in its early stages and hence it is dated Summer 1613 by Gosse (II: 28). The book that Donne refers to (l. 30) is A Supplement to the Discussion of M. D. Barlowe's Answere by Thomas Fitzherbert, printed in 1613. In it Fitzherbert attacks part of Donne's argument in Pseudo-Martyr (see Bald, Life 224-26). Donne asserts in this letter, however, that he will ignore this partial attack because he knows (probably through Sir Tobie Mathew, who was closely associated with the English Jesuit College of St. John in Louvaine) that the Jesuits at Louvaine are planning to answer his whole book, and he will wait for their book to appear before responding. Donne also refers to Fitzherbert's book in a letter to George Garrard (Letters, p. 284).

The initials S.H.W. almost certainly refer to Sir Henry Wotton, as Gosse (II: 28) indicates. Sir Henry Wotton's nephew Mr. M. refers to his great-nephew Sir Albertus Morton. Sir Albertus Morton (1584?-1625) was the youngest son of George Morton of Esture or Eshere, in Chilham, Kent. His grandfather was Robert Morton, whose widow (Eleanor) married Thomas Wotton and was Sir Henry Wotton's mother (Smith II: 474). This letter supports part of Walton's account that Somerset attempted to procure the post of one of the Clerks of the Council for Donne and was refused by King James.

> Many persons of worth mediated with his Majesty for some secular employment for him (to which his education had apted him) and particularly the Earl of Somerset, when in his greatest height of favour; who being then at Theobalds with the King, where one of the Clerks of the Council died that night, the Earl posted a messenger for Mr. Donne to come to him immediately, and at Mr. Donne's coming, said, Mr. Donne, To testifie the reality of my Affection, and my purpose to prefer you, Stay in this Garden till I go up to the King, and bring you word that you are Clark of the Council: doubt not my doing this, for I know the King loves you, and know the King will not

> deny me. But the King gave a positive denial to all requests, and having a discerning spirit, replied, I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned Divine; and will prove a powerful Preacher, and my desire is to prefer him that way, and in that way, I will deny you nothing for him. (Walton, Lives, 45-46)

Bald (Life 289-90) discusses the inaccuracies of Walton's account and concludes that Walton "either made a mistake about the office which Somerset attempted to secure for Donne, or has coloured his story too vividly." Aside from the dramatized conversation between Somerset and King James, Bald points out that Walton's story is inaccurate in two points. First, no Clerk of the Council died while Somerset was Donne's patron; second, Donne presented his copy of Pseudo-Martyr to the King in 1610, several years before Somerset became Donne's patron. Bald's investigations into the various positions of Clerk of the Council, however, reveal that, while no clerk died, three new clerks were appointed between 22 July 1613 and 20 December 1614 when Albertus Morton was sworn in as an additional extraordinary clerk (Bald, Life 293). Donne's reference to Morton seeking one of the several positions which Donne was also seeking indicates that Walton was correct in identifying the position Donne sought. Donne must have been seeking one of the new positions. He did not give up hope for state employment until about September 1614 and determined to enter the church around the end of November, as he indicates in a letter to Goodyer in the Letters (p. 172).

112

To the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount of Rochester.

My most Honourable good Lord,
AFter I was grown to be your Lordships, by all the titles that I could thinke upon, it hath pleased your Lordship to make another title to me, by buying me. You may have many better bargaines in your purchases, but never a better title then to me, nor any thing which you may call yours more absolutely and intirely. If therefore I appeare before your Lordship sometimes in these Letters of thankfulnesse, it may be an excusable boldnesse, because they are part of your evidences by which you hold me. I know there may be degrees of importunity even in thankfulnesse: but your Lordship is got above the danger of suffering that from me, or my Letters, both because my thankfulnesse cannot reach to the benefits already received, and because the favour of receiving my Letters is a new benefit. And since good Divines have made this argument against deniers of the Resurrection, that it is easier for God to recollect the Principles, and Elements of our bodies, howsoever they be scattered, then it was at first to create them of nothing, I cannot doubt, but that any distractions or diversions in the ways of my hopes, will be easier to your Lordship to reunite, then it was to create them. Especially since you are already so near perfecting them, that if it agreed with your Lordships purposes, I should never wish other station, then such as might make me still, and onely

Your Lordships
Most humble and devoted servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 112 (290-91)

Also in T.M.C. No. 23 (318); Gosse (II: 22-23)

Collation

Letters pp. 290-91

T.M.C. pp. 318-19

Title: *To the Right Honorable the Lord Viscount of* Rochester. — *Letters* pp. 290-91
The same person to the Lord of Rochester. *It consists of high Complenents, and much kindness*. — *T.M.C*. pp. 318-19

My most Honourable good Lord,] *My honoured good Lord*,

11. 1-2 Lord-ships] Lord-ship's *T.M.C*.

1. 2 titles] Titles

1. 3 thinke] think

1. 4 title] Title

1. 6 never a better title then] never better Title,

1. 7 to me, nor] nor

1. 8 absolutely] absolutelie,
intirely. If] entirelie than me. If

1. 9 therefore] therefore, appeare] appear
Lordship] Lordship,

1. 10 thankfulnesse] Thankfulnesse

1. 11 excusable] excuseable

1. 12 are part of your evidences] are your evidences,

1. 14 importunity] importunitie, thankfulnesse:] thankfulnesse

1. 18 already] alreadie

1. 19 Letters] Letters,

1. 20 And since] Since

1. 22 God] God,

1. 23 recollect] re-unite Principles,] Principles

1. 25 then] than

1. 26 nothing, I] nothing. I

l. 27 distractions] distractions, diversions] diversions, ways] waies

l. 29 reunite] re-unite then it was] than it will

ll. 29-30 them. Especially] them; especiallie

l. 30 are already so] are so

l. 31 that if it agreed] that, if it agree'd

l. 32 Lordships] Lordship's

l. 33 then] than

l. 34 onely] onely,

Your Lordships] your Lordship's

Most humble and devoted servant] most humble and devoted servant

J. Donne.] in signature

Notes

l. 21 denier denyers: those who deny the Resurrection

Commentary

Gosse (II: 22) dates this letter February 1612/13 based on its relation to *T.M.C*. No. 24 (an earlier letter to Lord Rochester which can be confidently dated October 1612). Bald (*Life* 273) indicates that it was certainly written within the year following Donne's October letter to Rochester. Hester (xx) dates the letter in the summer of 1613. From the contents of this letter it is clear that Somerset had promised Donne a position but was encountering some difficulties in delivering it. This letter is quite likely about the same position Donne discusses in *T.M.C*. No. 22 (see the Commentary on that letter). If it is, Hester's dating is correct.

113

To your selfe [Sir Robert Ker].

SIR,

I Make shift to think that I promised you this book of French Satyrs. If I did not, yet it may have the grace of acceptation, both as it is a very forward and early fruit, since it comes before it was looked for, and as it comes from a good root, which is an importune desire to serve you. Which since I saw from the beginning, that I should never do in any great thing, it is time to begin to try now, whether by often doing little services, I can come towards any equivalence. For, except I can make a rule of naturall philosophy, serve also in morall offices, that as the strongest bodies are made of the smallest particles, so the strongest friendships may be made of often iterating small officiousnesses, I see I can be good for nothing. Except you know reason to the contrary, I pray deliver this Letter according to the addresse. It hath no businesse, nor importunity; but as by our Law, a man may be Felo de se, if he kill himself, so I think a man may be Fur de se, if he steale himselfe out of the memory of them, which are content to harbour him. And now I begin to be loath to be lost, since I have afforded my selfe some valuation and price, ever since I received the stampe and impression of being

Your very humble and affectionate servant

J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 114 (294-95)

Also in Gosse (II: 10-11)

Notes

Felo de se: "felon of himself": a legal term

Fur de se: "thief of himself": Donne's coining by analogy.

Commentary

This letter was assigned to George Garrard by Gosse, but Bennett shows that it falls into the group of letters (Nos. 111 to 128) to Ker. According to Gosse (II: 10), the "French Satyrs" refers to

> the first authoritative edition of Regnier's Satyres et autres oeuvres folastres, published in 1612 when Donne was in Paris. This issue was the first to contain the celebrated "Macette," which cannot but have greatly interested Donne, as the entirely successful execution of a scheme which he himself had unsuccessfully attempted twenty years before.

The point of this letter, aside from Donne's sending the book he promised, is to keep him in the minds of Ker and Somerset (for whom the enclosure was intended). The early part of this letter indicates that Donne's relationship with Ker (and Somerset) has been of some duration (it began in October 1612) (Bald, Life 273). The conclusion of the letter also suggests that he has received some indication from Ker and Somerset that he can expect some kind of preferment through them. Donne indicates in this letter that he has as yet done nothing of service for Somerset; this might suggest that the letter was written before Somerset asked Donne to write an epithalamion for his marriage or collect his poetry for publication in a volume dedicated to Somerset. Hence, I date this letter 1613.

114

To my best of friends Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Heard not from you this week; there-
fore I write more willingly, because it
hath in it so much more merit. And I
might do it very cheaply, since to convey
to you this Letter, which mine hath the ho-

nour to bring, any little Letter would serve, and be acceptable for that. Because it came not last week, I went now to solicite it, and she sent it me next day with some thankes, and some excuse that she knew not me, when I was with her. You know, I do not easily put my self into those hazards, nor do much brag of my valor now, otherwise then I purposed it for a service to you. The newest thing that I know in the world, is my new son: whose mothers being well takes off from me any new waight upon my fortune. I hear in Newgate, that M. Mathew is dead. The Catholiques beleeve it there: perchance out of a custome of credulity. But the report, is close prisoner; for I never met it abroad. This is my third letter, all which I sent by Spelty whom my boy found at Abington house. I have now two of the best happinesses which could befall me, upon me; which are, to be a widower and my wife alive, which may make you know, that it is but for your ease, that this letter is no longer, in this leasure in which (having nothing else to write) I might vary a thousand ways that I am

Monday at night. Your very affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 58 (178-79)

Also in Gosse (II: 18)

Notes

ll. 18-19	M. Mathew: Sir Tobie Mathew
l. 23	Spelty: a messenger whom Donne used to deliver letters
l. 24	Abington house

Commentary

This letter can be dated by the combination of Donne's reference to his new son and the rumors of Sir Tobie Mathew's death. Donne states that he heard the rumors of Mathew's death in Newgate Prison. Donne's stepfather, Richard Rainsford, was imprisoned in Newgate Prison for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance and the records show that he was imprisoned during February 1611/12, May 1612, and February 1612/13. He was released after February 1612/13, but re-imprisoned on 6 August 1613 for recusancy (Bald, Life 267-68). Bald suggests that Donne heard the news of Mathew's supposed death during a visit to Rainsford. Donne's son Nicholas was born on 3 August 1613, a date which coincides with Rainsford's re-imprisonment.

The lady who wrote a letter to Goodyer which Donne sends with this letter was possibly the Countess of Huntingdon, whose household Goodyer had become attached to by this time (Bald, Life 276). Bald explains Donne's cryptic phrase about being a widower and his wife alive to mean that his wife was well and away on a visit to the country (Bald, Life 268).

115

To the Countesse of Bedford.

MADAM,

AMongst many other dignities which this letter hath by being received and seen by you, it is not the least, that it was prophesied of before it was born: for your brother told you in his letter, that I had written: he did me much honour both in advancing my truth so farre as to call a promise an act already done; and to provide me a means of doing him a service in this act, which is but doing right to my self: for by this performance of mine own word, I have also justified that part of his Letter which concerned me; and it had been a double guiltinesse in me, to have made him guilty towards you. It makes no difference that this came not the same day,

> nor bears the same date as his; for though in inheritances and worldly possessions we consider the dates of Evidences, yet in Letters, by which we deliver over our affections, and assurances of friendship, and the best faculties of our souls, times and daies cannot have interest, nor be considerable, because that which passes by them, is eternall, and out of the measure of time. Because therefore it is the office of this Letter, to convey my best wishes, and all the effects of a noble love unto you, (which are the best fruits that so poor a soil, as my poor soul is, can produce) you may be pleased to allow the Letter thus much of the souls privilege, as to exempt it from straitnesse of hours, or any measure of times, and so beleeve it came then. And for my part, I shall make it so like my soul, that as that affection, of which it is the messenger, begun in me without my knowing when, any more then I know when my soul began; so it shall continue as long as that.
>
> Your must affectionate friend and servant
> J. D.

Source: *Letters* No. 9 22-24

Also in Gosse (II: 42)

Commentary

Sir John Harrington, the brother of the Countess of Bedford and the second Lord Harrington, succeeded to the title on the death of his father on 23 August 1613. He did not survive his father long, dying of smallpox on 27 February 1613/14. Lord Harrington probably contracted the disease on a visit to the continent in 1613. He was only twenty-one at the time of his death (Bald, *Life* 276). This letter appears in Gosse, among others from 1613, and Hester gives that date in his edition of the letters. There is little internal evidence that is useful for establishing the date. Perhaps Gosse had in mind Donne's discussion of how the world treats "inheritances and worldly possessions" compared with "assurances of friendship" and "affections" delivered through letters. The death of the first Lord Harrington may have brought such a comparison to Donne's mind; he certainly refers to the Countess of Bedford's inheritance in a later letter which accompanied Donne's "Obsequies to the Lord Harrington" written after the death of the second Lord Harrington. (See _Poems_, 1633, p. 139.)

116

To your selfe [Sir Robert Ker].

SIR,
IF I shall never be able to do you any reall service, yet you may make this profit of me, that you be hereafter more cautelous in receiving into your knowledge, persons so uselesse, and importune. But before you come to so perfect a knowledge of me, as to abandon me, go forward in your favours to me, so farre, as to deliver this Letter according to the addresse. I think I should not come nearer his presence then by a Letter: and I am sure, I would come no other way, but by you. Be you therefore pleased, by these noble favours to me, to continue in me the comfort which I have in being

Your very humble and thankfull servant
Drury house, 23 Sept.
J. Donne.

Source: _Letters_ No. 121 (304)

Also in Gosse (II: 29)

Notes

l. 3 cautelous [cautels] cautious, n.d.; heedful (_O.E.D._, 1661)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 29) mistakenly assumes that all letters headed "To Yourself" were written by Donne to George Garrard. This letter was written to Sir Robert Ker (later Earl of Ancrum) with another letter enclosed for his cousin, also named Sir Robert Ker (the Earl of Somerset), possibly Letters No. 112 or T.M.C. No. 22. I differentiate between the two Sir Robert Kers by adding their titles.) Donne moved into Drury House in the fall of 1612; Bald (Donne & the Drurys 104) suggests that his formal tenancy began at Michaelmas (September 29) 1612. Donne and the Drurys had arrived back from their trip to the continent at the end of August 1612. Bennett ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons of Honour" 124) asserts that this letter was written to Ker along with another letter that appears in the Letters addressed "To Yourself," Letter No. 114: "Both were probably sent to Sir Robert Ker with letters either to his kinsman, Sir Robert Carr [also spelled Ker], the royal favorite [Somerset], or to the Prince, whom Ker served." Prince Henry died on 6 November 1612 (Akrigg 135), and this letter is unlikely to have been written to accompany a letter to the Prince for a number of reasons. First, the letter was written from Drury House, and, as Bald indicates, Donne probably did not reside there until October 1612. Thus, since the letter is dated 23 September it was more likely 1613 or later. Second, Donne decided to go straight to the Isle of Wight after his return to London (Bald, Donne & the Drurys 102) and appears to have been occupied with other matters than patronage during September 1612. Third, Prince Henry was ill from the spring of 1612 until he died, and although he remained active until 24 October, it was unlikely that September would have been an auspicious time to approach him. Bennett's alternative suggestion, that the letter was to Sir Robert Ker accompanying a letter to Somerset, is more likely, given other letters from Donne to Ker and Somerset in 1613 and 1614. Bennett accepts that this letter was written to Ker because it occurs in the 1651 Letters in a large group of letters to Ker (Nos. 111-28) (Bennett, "Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 140).

117

To the Honourable Knight, Sir ROBERT KARRE.

Sir,

YOur mans haste gives me the advantage, that I am excusable in a short Letter, else I should not pardon it to my selfe. I shall obey your commandment of comming so neare you upon Michaelmas day, as by a Message to aske you whether that or the next morning bee the fittest to sollicite your further Favour. You understand all Vertue so well, as you may be pleased to call to minde what thankfulnesse and services are due to you from me, and beleeve them all to bee expressed in this ragge of Paper, which gives you new assurance, that I am ever

Your most humble servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 120 (303)

Also in Gosse (II: 372)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 372) includes this letter in an appendix because he can assign no date to it. The letter contains a reference to Donne visiting Sir Robert Ker either on Michaelmas Day or the following morning.

Michaelmas was September 29 (old style) and an English quarter day. The letter must, then, have been written in September, probably in 1613 like the letter following this one in the 1651 Letters, although 1614 is also possible. The years 1613 and 1614 were the period when Donne most actively solicited the "Favour" of Sir Robert Ker, because during this period Ker acted as an intermediary between Donne and Sir Robert Ker, the Earl of Somerset. Donne remained friends with Ker for the rest of his life, and the kind of letters Donne wrote to him became less "solicitous."

118

To my Honoured Friend, Master George Gherard [Garrard].

SIR,

YOur Letter was the more welcome to mee, because it brought your commandment with it, of sending you perfumes: for it is a Service somewhat like a Sacrifice. But yet your commandment surprised me, when neither I had enough to send, nor had means to recover more; that Ladie being out of Towne which gave them me. But Sir, if I had 10000000. I could send you no more then I doe; for I send all. If any good occasion present it selfe to you, to send to my L. Clifford, spare my name a roome, there where you offer him most of your Service. I dare contend with you, that you cannot exceed mee, in desiring to serve him. It is a better office from me to you, that I goe to bed, then that I write a longer letter. For if I doe mine eyes a little more injurie, I shall lose the honour of seeing you at Michaelmas; for by my troth I am almost blinde: you may be content, to beleeve that I am always disposed to your service, without exception of any time, since now just at mid-

night, when it is both day, and night,
and neither, I tell you that I am
Your affectionate friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 106 (280-81)

Also in Gosse (II: 29)

Commentary

Bald (Life 278) dates this letter September 1613. The reference in the letter to Donne visiting Garrard at Michaelmas (September 29) indicates that the letter was written in September. The reference to Henry, Lord Clifford, helps to date this letter because Lord Clifford was married to the Earl of Salisbury's only daughter Frances in 1611/12, and Garrard had entered the service of his son, the young Earl of Salisbury, by 1613. (The first Earl died on 24 May 1612.) Garrard had previously been in Prince Henry's household, which was dissolved after the prince's death in 1612.

Donne had met Lord Clifford in 1611/12. Lord Clifford was on a tour of the continent which he had begun immediately after his marriage to Frances Cecil, and in a letter Donne mentions Clifford's visit to Amiens, where he called on Sir Robert Drury and Donne. Feil (309) points out that such a visit was logical considering that both Donne and Sir Robert Drury "had connections" both directly with the elder Lord Salisbury and through Salisbury's closest friend, Sir Walter Cope, and Lord Clifford was his new son-in-law. Clifford was 20 at the time of his visit to Amiens.

119

To Sir G.B. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

IT is one of my blinde Meditations to think what a miserable defeat it would be to all these preparations of braverie, if my infirmity should overtake others: for, I am at least half blinde, my windows are all as full of glasses of Waters, as any Mountebanks stall. This messenger makes haste, I thank him for it; therefore I onely send you this Letter, which was sent to me about three daies past, and my promise to distribute your other Letters, according to your addresses, as fast as my Monsieur can doe it; for, for any personall service, you must be content, at this time, to pardon

Decemb. 23. Your affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 67 (201)

Also in Gosse (II: 30)

Commentary

Bald (Life 228) suggests that this letter was written in 1613 and that the "preparations of braverie" refer to the decorations being prepared for Somerset's marriage, which took place on 26 December 1613 at Chapel Royal at Whitehall (Akrigg, 186). It is not clear from Bald's use of a quotation from this letter whether or not he means to imply that this letter, like Letters No. 106 (280-81), was written to George Garrard. Gosse (II: 33) identifies the recipient as Sir G.B., "a cadet of the Brydes family," accepting the suggestion of Rev. William Hunt. Keynes (139) follows Gosse's suggestion of Sir G. B[rydges] as the recipient. Bennett ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 137) assigns this letter to Goodyer even though it is "a brief note which yields no clue" to the recipient because "No. 60, which is headed with the same initials, is very probably to Goodere." We do know that Donne regularly received and forwarded letters for Goodyer and distributed letters from Goodyer to his correspondents. Bennett is most likely correct here.

1614

120

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

I Make account that it is a day of great distribution of Honours at Court: I would not therefore lose my part, and increase therein; since every Letter admitted by you from me, is a new stone in my best building, which is, my roome in your service: so much you adde to me, everie time you give me leave thus to kisse your hands. But, Sir, everie addition preimagins a beeing, and the time of my beeing and Creation is not yet come: which I am sure you will advance; because else I am no competent Subject of your favours, and additions. I know, by your forbearing to tell mee so, that my L. hath had no commoditie to move the K. and if this Paper speake one word of difference, or impatience in my name, by my troth it lies. Onely give it leave to tell you, that that L. whom perchance the K. may bee pleased to heare in it, is an old and momentarie man, and it may be late labouring for his assistance, next Winter. Besides, since it may bee possible that the Master of the Rolles may a little resent this suite, there could be no fitter time, then now, to make him easie, as things stand with him at this time. If you stay in Towne this Night, and no longer, I beseech you afford me a few of your late Minutes at your own lodging, where I will wait upon you according to any directions, which by this Gent. or otherwise I shall receive from you.

Your humble servant
John Donne.

Source: Letters No. 102 (274-75)

Also in Gosse (I: 239)

Commentary

Gosse (I: 238) dates this letter late 1610 because of a letter dated 14 February 1610 from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton in which Chamberlain writes that Donne was, for the second time, attempting to become Secretary of Virginia. Donne attempted to obtain the position of secretary of the colony in early 1609 (Johnson, "John Donne and the Virginia Company" 127). Johnson corrects Gosse's dating of the letter and implies that Donne made only one attempt to become secretary of the colony. The position Donne hoped for was given to his friend William Strachey. Johnson notes that many of Donne's friends were investors in the Virginia Company and that two friends, Sir Thomas Roe and Christopher Brooke, were members of the council. Moreover, after the reorganization of the Virginia Company in 1608 when the King appointed members of the council, replacements to the council and appointments to the colony were made by the council itself (Gardiner II: 58). All of this makes it inconceivable that Donne would seek this appointment indirectly through Sir Robert Ker, two unidentified Lords, and the King.

Much more likely is that this letter was written c. 1 January 1614. Donne's reference to the day of great distribution of honors at court may mean that this letter was written on New-Yeare's Day (January 1), which, although not the official New Year's Day, which was 25 March, was the day of gift giving. The Lord whom Donne asks Sir Robert Ker (later Earl of Ancrum) to approach for him who, in turn, will approach the King, must be the other Sir Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester. Through Rochester, Donne made various attempts for secular preferment in 1613 and 1614 before deciding to enter the Church. Those known about include becoming ambassador to either the Hague or Venice, becoming one of the clerks of the council, and another unspecified grant. The "old and momentarie" man was thus almost certainly Henry Howard, Earl of Northhampton, Rochester's close ally at this time. Howard died on 14 June 1614. This is Donne's only reference in his letters to Howard, an influential courtier, and a Catholic. Donne's reference indicates that he does not know Howard, which, of course, is not surprising considering that Donne had been allied with the Countess of Bedford and the Protestant faction at court.

121

To my worthy friend G.K. [Sir Henry Goodyear]

SIR,

I Receive this heare that I begin this return, your Letter by a servant of Sir *G. Greseley*, by whom also I hasten this dispatch. This needs no enlargement since it hath the honour to convey one from M. *Gherard*. But though by telling me, it was a bold letter, I had leave to open it, and that I have a little itch to make some animadversions & Criticismes upon it (as that there is a ciphar too much in the sum of the Kings debts, and such like) yet since my eyes do easily fall back to their distemper, and that I am this night to sup at Sir *A. Ingrams*, I had rather forfeit their little strength at his supper, then with writing such impertinencies: the best spending them, is upon the rest of your Letter, to which, Sir, I can only say in generall, that some appearances have been here, of some treatise concerning this Nullity, which are said to proceed from *Geneva*, but are beleeved to have been done within doors, by encouragements of some whose names I will not commit to this letter. My poor study having lyen that way, it may prove possible, that my weak assistance may be of use in this matter, in a more serious fashion, then an Epithalamion. This made me therefore abstinent in that kinde; yet by my troth, I think I shall not scape. I deprehend in

> my self more then an alacrity, a vehemency to do service to that company; and so, I may finde reason to make rime. If it be done, I see not how I can admit that circuit of sending them to you, to be sent hither; that seems a kinde of praying to Saints, to whom God must tell first, that such a man prays to them to pray to him. So that I shall lose the honour of that conveyance; but, for recompense, you shall scape the danger of approving it. My next Letter shall say more of this. This shall end with delivering you the remembrance of my Lady *Bartlet*, who is present at the sealing hereof,
>
> *Your very true and affectionate servant*
> Jan. 19. J. Donne.
>
> *Which name when there is any empty corner in your discourse with that noble Lady at* Ashby, *I humbly beseech you to present to her as one more devoted to her service then perchance you will say*.

Source: *Letters* No. 59 (179-81)

Also in Gosse (II: 24)

Notes

l. 3 Sir *G. Greseley* (of Drakelow Park, Burton-on-Trent)

ll. 5-6 M. *Gherard*: Donne's friend George Garrard

Sir Arthur Ingram: a financier and rival of Lionel Cranfield. Ingram's career is discussed in Prestwich's *Cranfield: Politics and Profits under the Early Stuarts*.

Commentary

Despite the initials G.K. that appear in the heading, this letter was written to Sir Henry Goodyer. This is confirmed by the postscript, which asks the recipient to present Donne's greetings to the Countess of Huntingdon. Goodyer was, of course, in her service after 1612.

Moreover, Donne passes on greetings to the recipient from Lady Bartlett. Goodyer lodged at the Bartletts' when in London. This letter, along with *Letters* No. 99 written to Sir Robert Ker, deals with the same topic, whether Donne will write an epithalamion for the marriage of the Duke of Somerset and Lady Frances Howard. Hence both can be dated January 1614.

122

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

I Had rather like the first best; not onely because it is cleanlier, but because it reflects least upon the other party, which, in all jest and earnest, in this affair, I wish avoided. If my Muse were onely out of fashion, and but wounded and maimed like Free will in the *Roman Church*, I should adventure to put her to an Epithalamion. But since she is dead, like Free-will in our Church, I have not so much Muse left as to lament her losse. Perchance this businesse may produce occasions, wherein I may expresse my opinion of it, in a more serious manner. Which I speake neither upon any apparent conjecture, nor upon any overvaluing of my abilities, but out of a generall readinesse and alacrity to be serviceable and gratefull in any kinde. In both which poor vertues of mine, none can pretend a more primary interest, then you may, in

Your humble and affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 99 (270-71)

Also in Gosse (II: 26-27)

Commentary

Sir Robert Ker had probably approached Donne to write an epithalamion for the marriage of the Earl of Somerset to Lady Frances Howard which took place on 26 December 1613. In another letter dated 19 January (1613/14) Donne offers to write a defence of the "Nullity" of Lady Frances Howard's marriage to the Earl of Essex, a task he judges "more serious" than an epithalamion. This letter explains the same thing to Sir Robert Ker and was very probably also written in January 1614. Despite Donne's wishes in the matter, he did write an epithalamion for the wedding and is not known to have written a defence of the annulment of Lady Frances Howard's marriage (see Bald, Life 273-74).

123

To Sir G.B. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

BEtween the time of making up my other Letters, and the hour that your man limited me to call for them, came to my house an other pacquet directed to him: for by this time, the carrier is as wise, as his horse, to go to the house that he hath used to go. I found liberty in the superscription to open, and so I did; but for that part which concerns him, I must attend his comming hither, for I know not where to seek him; and besides, I have enough to say for that part which concerns my self. Sir, even in the Letter it self to me, I deprehend much inclination, to chide me: and it is but out of your habit of good language that you spare me. So little occasion as that postscript of mine, could not bring you so near to it, if nothing else were mistaken, which (so God help me) was so little, that I remember not what it was, and I would no more hear again what I write in an officious Letter, then what I said at a drun-

> ken supper. I had no purpose to exercise your diligence in presenting my name to that Lady, but either I did, or should have said, that I writ onely to fill up any empty corner in your discourse. So, Sir, the reading of the Letter, was a kinde of travell to me, but when I came to the paper inclosed, I was brought to bed of a monster. To expresse my self vehemently quickly, I must say, that I can scarce think, that you have read M. _Gherards_ letter rightly, therefore I send you back your own again. I will not protest against my being such a knave, for no man shall have that from me, if he expect it: but I will protest against my being such a fool, as to depose any thing in him with hope of locking it up, and against that lownesse, of seeking reputation by so poor a way. I am not so sorry, that I am a narrow man; as that for all the narrownesse, you have not seen through me yet, nor known me perfectly; for I might think by this, (if I had not other testimony) that I have been little in your contemplation. Sixteen letters from M. _Gherard_, could not (I think) perswade a _Middlesex_ Jury of so much dishonesty in
>
> _Your true servant_
> J. Donne.

Source: _Letters_ No. 60 (182-84) (the pages are misnumbered 183, 182, 184)

Also in Gosse (II: 35)

Commentary

The date and recipient of this letter are derived from another letter printed in Gosse (II: 33-34) from the Anderdon MSS. (see Keynes 132n.). That letter is dated Saturday, September 12, 1613/4, and contains more specific references to the same packet of letters discussed here. The Anderdon letter contains a reference to a letter to be delivered to Lord Chandos (the brother-in-law of Goodyer's employer, the Countess of Huntingdon), as well as references to letters from George

Garrard and Sir Thomas Roe, other members of Donne and Goodyer's circle. For further information see the following letter (No. 124).

124

[Sir Henry Goodyer]

S^{r}

As [I have] returnd back to you, the Indictment, soe doe I the
Evidence, this parcell of M^{r} Gerard's Letter, and now I appeal
to yo^{r}selfe, whether you had from thence any ground to imagin
such an opennesse in mee, and whether I be not soe thoroughly clear
that even hee is cleere too. I perceive that he being present wth
me, at the receite of some of yo^{r} Letters, and findeing vpon his questtoning of me, that sometymes there was noe mention of the
receite of his Letters, he grew ielious of theire miscaryinge; And
soe S^{r} I thinke, there is more Glosse spent upon the Letter then
it was worth, and you and I stand well towards one another.
I carryed the Letter w^{ch} was addressed to my Lo: Chandis, but
I founde him not: he was expected to come to Towne this evening,
therefore I writt to his Lopp: and inclosed that Letter, and left
them there to awaite his returne. He understands by mine, that
I have Comoditie of sending backe tomorrow; and therefore perchance
may send heather before the ffootman call for this pacquet. All
the letters w^{ch} I send you herewth, (except onely that from S^{r} Tho.
Roe) came to my hands wthin an houre after I had sent away
Last Tuesday by the Carrier of the Rose, w^{ch} brought a Letter
from my Lord Chandis. If by this delay in my hands eyther of those
Letters haue lost any of theire vertue, you may putt it vpon the score
of my Ill fortunes, but not of my faults. I presume M^{r} Gerards
Letter hath left me nothing to say, except I speake of things after
his date. That w^{ch} is most remarquable fell out yesterday for S^{r}
Stephen Proctor's great cause, concerning my L: of Northampton
being yesterday heard in the *Starchamber*, where wee thought
to see him crushed, y^{e} opinions were equall, and the Chancellor's
opinion on the Discharging side: soe was the Chancellor of the
Exchiquer, and the 2 Bishops. and they w^{ch} condemned him,
(as I thinke) were all Judges at Law. There is come out a most
poetical proclamation against Duells, wth a book annext to it,
for direction in such accidents, w^{ch} I would have sent you, but
that it is to bigge. And as they pride thereby, that wee shallnot
thinke of killing one another, soe I must pride by yo^{r} favor that
you spend none of yo^{r} thoughts, upon *selfe killinge*, for I must
intreate you to forbeare that Booke, tyll I have the honour to be
wth you. The K: at his goeing away left the Debatement
of the parlament to his Councell, who have resolved nothing
therein, as yett, soe that the assurence thereof is not so vehement
as it was. It is taken yll, though it be but mistaken that

Certeyne men (whome they call undertakers) should presume eyther to
understand y^{e} house, before it sitt, or to incline it then, & this rumour
beforehand, will much impeach, if it doe not defeate their purposes
at last. I know nothing els, that other men are not likely to know
mor perfitly then and to deliver to you more Credibly; therefore I heere,
S^{r} kisse yo^{r} hand, and continue to you the intire possession of
Yo^{r} poore and affectionate seruant
JO: DONNE:

Sat. 12 Feb. 1613

Source: Roger Barrett of Chicago (Anderdon MSS.)

Also in Gosse (II: 33-34)

Textual Notes

This is one of the letters from the "Anderdon MSS," as Gosse describes them. They are copies of five of Donne's letters on two folio leaves originally conjoined. One leaf of this MS formerly owned by Miss Mary Donne of Chester is now at St. Paul's Cathedral (Donne file in safe) (Beal 244). The letters on this sheet are Gosse I: 109; II: 16; and II: 206. The other leaf, in the collection of Roger Barrett of Chicago, contains Gosse I: 309-10 and II: 33. See the Textual Introduction for more information.

Closing The date in the postscript appears entirely in the left margin in the MS.

Commentary

This letter can be shown to have been written to Sir Henry Goodyer, in part because it most closely follows *Letters* No. 60 (183), "To Sir G.B.," which, although not addressed to Goodyer in the letters, has been shown to have been written to him. In both this letter and *Letters* No. 60, Donne is forced to defend himself against accusations by George Garrard that he has been careless in forwarding Garrard's letters to

Goodyer. In Letters No. 60 Donne also defends himself from the charge that he was impertinently using Goodyer to pass on greetings to a lady (probably the Countess of Huntington) for some purpose of his own.

This letter must be the second of the two, because Donne states that he has already returned Garrard's letter, the "indictment," presumably sent with Letters No. 60, and with this letter the letter that Donne wrote to Garrard which must have in part caused the misunderstanding. Donne appears to exercise great restraint in this incident, showing no irritation at Garrard for making his accusations or at Goodyer for possibly being ready to accept them. The incident appears to have been completed with this letter and the three men appear to have remained good friends. The affair illustrates the volatile atmosphere of James's court when long-standing friends could suddenly become suspicious of each other.

The mix-up over Donne's handling of Goodyer's letters undoubtedly contributes to Donne's scrupulous explanation of his handling of Goodyer's letter to Lord Chandos and why Goodyer received his letter from Sir Thomas Roe later than other letters Goodyer received through Donne last week. Lord Chandos was married to Anne Stanley, the older sister of Elizabeth, who was married to Henry, Lord Hastings, the Earl of Huntington. Goodyer was in the service of the Countess of Huntington at this time. Sir Thomas Roe was a cousin of George Garrard's. (Garrard's mother was Elizabeth Roe, a daughter of Sir Thomas Roe, the grandfather of Donne's friend Sir Thomas Roe [Bald, Life 159].)

Donne's news about "the most poetical proclamation against duels" refers to A Proclamation against Private Challenges and Combats (London, 1614). Duelling had been a growing problem during the reign of James, and he was determined to stop it. He first had Sir Francis Bacon announce in court that all challenges and duels would become a matter for the Court of Star Chamber. Then in February 1614, he issued his "poetical proclamation" which set a day, forty days later, after which nobody was "to send or accept any Challenge." In this proclamation, James described duelling as a root producing daily "fruits of very bitter taste, and desperate effect," and declared that those who thought there was any true honour in a duel must have drunk the "very dregges of Circes Cup" (Akrigg 257). James followed this proclamation with His Majesties Edict against Private Combats, which announced the new penalties to be enforced. See Akrigg (248-58) for a general discussion of the rise of duelling and James's measures to stop it.

Donne's reference to duelling is followed by a reference to his book Biathanatos, a treatise on suicide. He asks Goodyer to "forbear" the book until Donne is with him. Donne was probably reluctant to entrust the book to a messenger. Perhaps, also, he wanted to guide Goodyer's response to the book, because Goodyer was not constant in his religion and Donne's letters often counsel Goodyer in religious matters. Donne concludes his letter by giving news of the upcoming parliament, which met on April 5, 1614. The "undertakers" to whom Donne refers included Sir Henry Neville who told King James that if he satisfied the House of Commons on certain points Neville "dared undertake for most of them [members of the House] that the King's majesty, proceeding in a gracious course towards his people, should find those gentlemen exceeding willing to do him service" (Akrigg 373). Donne correctly anticipates the failure of the "undertakers" because of resentment against their presumption.

Many elections were bitterly fought between independent candidates and those who favoured the king (Akrigg 374).

125

To the Honourable Sir R.D. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Gave no answer to the Letter I received from you upon Tuesday, both because I had in it no other commandment by it but to deliver your Letter therein, which I did, and because that Letter found me under very much sadnesse, which (according to the proportion of ills that fall upon me) is since also increased, so that I had not written now, if I had been sure to have been better able to write next week, which I have not much appearance of: yet there was committed to my disposition (that is, left at my house in my absence) a Letter from Sir W. Lover, but it was some hours after all possibility of sending it by the carrier, so that M^r^. W. Stanhope giving me the honour of a visite at that time, and being instantly to depart, for your parts, did me the favour to undertake the delivery of it to you. With me, Sir, it is thus, there is not one person (besides my self) in my house well. I have already lost half a child, and with that mischance of hers, my wife fallen into an indisposition, which would afflict her much, but that the sicknesse of her children stupefies her: of one of which, in good faith, I have not much hope. This meets a fortune so ill provided for physique and such relief, that if God should ease us with burialls, I know not well how to performe even that. I flatter my self in this, that I am dying too: nor can I truly dye faster, by any waste, then by losse of children. But Sir, I will mingle no more of my sadness to you, but wil a little recompense it, by telling you that my L. Harrington, of whom a few days since they were doubtfull, is so well recovered that now they know all his disease to be the Pox, and Measels mingled. This I heard yesterday: for I have not been

> there yet. I came as near importunity as I could, for an answer from Essex house, but this was all, that he should see you shortly himselfe.
>
> Your servant
> J. Donne.
>
> I cannot tell you so much, as you tell me, of any thing from my Lord of Som. since the Epithalamion, for I heard nothing.

Source: Letters No. 50 (151-53)

Also in Gosse (II: 36-37)

Commentary

Bennett (124) regards the recipient of this letter as Sir Henry Goodyer. He groups it with three others linked by Shapiro (Letters Nos. 54, 59, and 60) and one other letter from the Anderdon MS. printed in Gosse (II: 33-34). Bennett's reasons for considering Goodyer the recipient of this letter are, first, that this letter contains an account of the illness to his family which Donne refers to in Letters No. 54, and second, that these five letters are linked by the recipient's (Sir Henry Goodyer's) apparent anger at Donne over a request of Donne's to mention him to the Countess of Huntingdon, and further irritation because Donne was reported to be negligent in forwarding his mail. Goodyer's anger was based on assumptions he made from a letter he received from George Garrard, a mutual friend of his and Donne's. Thus, this letter must have been written in February 1613/14 as the others were. Another decisive piece of evidence that helps date the letter is the reference to Lord Harrington's illness; he died on 27 February 1613/14. Donne's postscript makes it clear that he had written the Epithalamion for Somerset's wedding by this time, but had not heard whether it pleased Somerset or not. Donne's illness had prevented him from having it ready for the wedding itself, which took place on 26 December 1613.

Sir William Lover [Lower] is mentioned in a later letter to Goodyer as one who is bringing a suit against him (see Letters No. 65). Bald (Life 229) mentions Sir William Lower as a possible link between Donne and the mathematician Thomas Hariot, who was a protege of Sir Walter Raleigh and a pensioner of the Earl of Northumberland. Lower was Hariot's pupil and correspondent. Bald conjectures that through Hariot (and possibly Lower) Donne was made aware of Kepler's discoveries in astronomy.

Mr. William Stanhope: unknown; possibly a relation of Mrs. Cokayne (Ann Stanhope) and Lady Aston (Cordelia Stanhope).

126

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Receive this 14 your Letter of the 10. yet I am not come to an understanding how these Carriers keep daies: for I would fain think that the Letters which I sent upon Thursday last might have given you such an account of the state of my family, that you needed not have asked by this. But Sir, it hath pleased God to adde thus much to my affliction, that my wife hath now confessed her self to be extremely sick; she hath held out thus long to assist me, but is now overturn'd, & here we be in two beds, or graves; so that God hath marked out a great many of us, but taken none yet. I have passed ten daies without taking any thing; so that I think no man can live more thriftily. I have purged and vexed my body much since I writ to you, and this day I have missed my fit: and this is the first time, that I could discern any intermission. This

is enough, the rest I will spend upon the parts of your Letter: Your Letter at Pauls is delivered. In the History of that remove, this onely perchance may be news to you, that M^{r} Alabaster hath got of the King the Deans best Living worth above 300^{l}, which the Dean had good hope to have held a while. Of that which you writ concerning a Book of the Nullity, I have heard no syllable any other way. If you have received it by good hands, I beleeve it with you: otherwise the report is naturally very incredible. Though the answering of it be a work for some, both of better abilities really, and in common reputation also, yet I was like enough to have had some knowledge thereof. You mention again some thing which it seems you are not willing I should understand of my Lady Huntington: some of your former Letters, have spoken of some other former Letters, (which I never saw) which speak of the matter as of a history and thing done; and these later Letters speak of it Prophetically, as of a future contingent. I am glad the often remembrance of it, gives me often occasion of thankfulnesse to her, for retaining me in her memory, and of professing my self in my end, and ways, her most humble servant. For your Parliament businesse, I should be very sorry, if you came not up, because I presume you had seposed many businesses, to have been done at that time; but in the ways wherein you have gone, I protest I am diffident. For first, for that L. whom you solicited by Letters through me, I tell you with the whispering of a secret, but the confidence of a friend, that you will be deceived whensoever you think that he should take any delight in doing you a courtesie. And I am afraid, the true heartinesse of the other noble Gentleman M. Howard, will be of small use in this particular, if he have but solicited my L. his father to reserve a blanke for his friend, for my L. hath suffered more deniall s, even in places where he sent names, then could have been feared. Besides M. How. hath not written to his father therein, but to M. Woodward, who perceiving those Letters to be written, before his purpose of being Knight for the shire, thinkes these Letters extinguished. You made me offer so long

> since of a place (it was when you writ into the west) yet I could think it no merit to have offered you one since, otherwise it hath been since in my power, for since the M^{r}. of the Rolls provided me one, Sir Ed. Herbert, who makes haste away, made me a present of his; and I have had a third offer. The businesse of your last weeks Letter concerning the widow, is not a subject for a feverous mans consideration. Therefore I only send you back those Letters which you sent; and aske you leave to make this which I am fain to call my good day, so much truly good, as to spend the rest of it with D. Layfield, who is, upon my summons, at this hour come to me. My Physicians have made me afraid, that this disease will work into my head, and so put me into lightnesses, therefore I am desirous that I be understood before any such danger overtake me.
>
> 14. March. Your true poor servant
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 54 (167-71)

Also in Gosse (II: 37-39)

Commentary

This letter can be confidently dated 14 March 1614 because of Donne's date in the postscript, but also because of the numerous references to current events, both public and private, that establish the year and confirm the day. The reference to Donne's entire family being very ill is also found in Letters No. 50 (151-53), written in February 1614.

The "Book of Nullity" to which Donne refers was probably the rumored attack on the annulment of the marriage of the Earl of Essex and Lady Frances Howard which was contrived by King James to permit her marriage to Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester, who was James's favorite. Donne also refers to this expected attack in Letters No. 59 (180-81) and No. 99 (270). No such attack was ever printed, however.

The Mr. Alabaster referred to by Donne was William Alabaster, the poet (see The Sonnets of William Alabaster) and the author of the Latin comedy Roxana. Alabaster's appointment was as the rector of Tharfield, Hertfordshire, where he succeeded John Overall, who was promoted from Dean of St. Paul's to the see of Coventry and Lichfield. Alabaster had been a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, with Dr. Layfield (mentioned later in this letter); both were Orientalists. Alabaster several years later published a pentaglot dictionary (Bald, Life 282). Donne's reference to Layfield suggests that he was studying Hebrew with Dr. Layfield at this time. (See the Commentary for Letter No. 110.)

Donne also refers to a number of unidentified items of interest to himself and Goodyer. Donne indicates that he has forwarded Goodyer's letter to St. Paul's, presumably written to Overall. Donne indicates that along with Goodyer's offer of a place in parliament, he has had three more. He accepted an offer from the Master of the Rolls, Sir Edward Phelips. Bald (Life 285-86) states that there is no previously known connection between Phelips and Donne but suggests that Donne was one of the "worthy gentlemen" who frequented Phelips' table because Thomas Coryate, in sending greetings to Phelips from India, lists a number of Donne's friends, including Richard Martin, Christopher Brooke and others, as well as a general greeting to those dining with Phelips. Donne also received an offer of a place in parliament from Sir Edward Herbert, who planned to return to the Low Countries in the spring of 1614 to fight the Spaniards (see Bald, Life 285). Herbert subsequently sent Sir John Danvers in his place. Danvers was the stepfather of Herbert and the second husband of Donne's friend Magdalen Herbert. Donne does not identify the source of his third offer. He hopes Goodyer will come up for parliament (the Addled Parliament of 1614) and to pursue his other interests, specifically a request made to an unidentified Lord and also pursued through M. Howard, son of Lord Howard, and M. Woodward. This is one of a number of letters in which Donne questions Goodyer's judgement in his strategy in pursuing various grants or appointments (see Letter No. 55, August 1608, for example). Donne also appears to be declining to write a letter for Goodyer to a widow, a sentence which suggests that Goodyer, a widower since 1606, was considering marriage, perhaps as an alternative means of restoring his fortune since it is mentioned by Donne in context with other business.

127

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

LEst you should think your selfe too much beholding to your fortune, and so relie too much upon her hereafter, I am bold to tell you, that it is not onely your good fortune that hath preserved you from the importunity of my visits all this time. For my ill fortune, which is stronger, then any mans good fortune, hath concurred in the plot to keep us asunder, by infecting one in my house with the Measels. But all that, is so safely overworne, that I dare, not onely desire to put my selfe into your presence, but by your mediation, a little farther. For, esteeming my selfe, by so good a title, as my Lords own words, to be under his providence, and care of my fortune, I make it the best part of my studies how I might ease his Lordship by finding out something for my selfe. Which, because I

> thinke I have done, as though I had done him a service therein, I adventure to desire to speake with him, which I beseech you to advance, in addition to your many favours and benefits to me. And if you have occasion to send any of your servants to this town, to give me notice, what times are fittest for me to waite, to injoy your favour herein. My businesse is of that nature, that losse of time may make it much more difficult, and may give courage to the ill fortune of
>
> _Your humble servant_
> J. Donne.

Source: _Letters_ No. 113 (292-93)

Also in Gosse (I: 238)

Commentary

This is one of a number of letters to Sir Robert Ker that simply ask him to deliver an enclosed letter. _Letters_ Nos. 114 and 121 are two others. Gosse (I: 237) wrongly suggests that the interview Donne sought was to ask (for the second time) for the position of secretary of the Virginia Company. See _Letters_ No. 102, Commentary, for a discussion of Gosse's dating of _Letters_ No. 102, which he connects with this letter.

This letter belongs either to 1613 or 1614, the period when Donne was in close contact with Rochester through Ker. In it Donne states that he has found a suitable position for himself and would like to ask Rochester about it. In a letter to Somerset of 20 March 1614 Donne asks explicitly to be made ambassador to Venice (_T.M.C_. 311-12); this letter, then, may belong to March 1614.

128

A Letter from J.D. to the Earl of Somerset, thankfully acknowledgeing the Earls kindness to him in his sickness, as also with a strong protestations of service.

My most honoured Lord,

SInce your Lordship will not let me dye, but have by your favour of sending to me, so much prevaled against a vehement feaver, that I am now in good degrees of convalescence. I was desirous that my first sacrifice, to any person in this World for my beginning of health, should be to your Lordship, That I might acknowledge, that, as ever since I had the happinesse to be in your Lordship's sight, I have lived upon your bread; so I owe unto your Lordship now all the means of my recoverie, and my health it self: So must all the rest of my life, and means be a debt to your Lordship, from whom, since I received a commandment, so much to assist my selfe, as to present to your Lordship whatsoever to appear to me likelie to advantage me, and ease your Lordship. I am now bold, in obedience of that commandment, to tell your Lordship, that that is told me, That Sir P.C. is likelie to be removed, from you to the States. If your Lordship have no particular determination upon that place, nor upon me, I humbly beseech your Lordship to pardon me the boldness, of asking you, Whether I may not be sent thither; All the substance, and all the circumstances of this, I most humbly submit to your Lordship, with a protestation as true, as if I had made it six daies since, when I thought my self verie near an end, that I had rather be any thing which arises out of your lordship, then any proposition of mine; and that I have been in possession of my farthest Ambitions, ever since I had the dignitie of being your most, &c.

Source: TMC No. 174 (311)

Also in Gosse (II: 40)

Textual Notes

l. 22 Sir P.C.: should read Sir D.C. [Sir Dudley Carleton]
from you: from Venice. See Donne's letter to Sir Robert Ker (the Earl of Ancrum) (Letters, pp. 297-99).

Commentary

This letter can be dated in part by its relationship to a number of other letters Donne wrote at this time, some of which are dated, and also by what we know of Donne's relationship with Somerset. In another letter that Donne wrote to Goodyer dated 14 March (Letters, pp. 167-71), he describes an illness which has kept him from eating for ten days and refers to a letter sent the previous Thursday which Goodyer apparently did not get, in which Donne described the state of his family. Donne's letter of 14 March can be attributed to 1613 because Donne informs Goodyer of his acceptance of a seat in parliament, which met 8 April 1613 (Bald, Donne and the Drurys 131). This letter also contains a reference to the appointment of William Alabaster to the see of Coventry and Lichfield which was announced in March 1613 (Bald, Life 282).

The dates of these letters help establish the date of the present letter to Somerset of c. 21 March 1613/14 because it refers to Donne's convalescence from the illness described in his previous letter of 14 March. The date is further established by Donne's request for the Ambassadorship at Venice, which he hears will soon be open with Sir Dudley Carleton's removal to his preferred former post at the Hague. In a subsequent letter to Sir Robert Ker (later Earl of Ancrum), who acted as an intermediary between Donne and Somerset, Donne tells him that if Carleton is not removed from Venice, he (Donne) would like the post at the Hague. This letter is enclosed with another letter also to Ker dated 20 March which refers to this letter as having been written the previous day, i.e., 19 March. The enclosure and covering letter are printed together in the Letters (297-99, 299-300); both describe Donne's desire to "kiss Ker's hands," but explain that he is unable to do so because of his illness which forced him to return home when he attempted to visit Ker. Thus the letter under discussion must have been written between 14 March and 19 March, but likely closer to the latter date.

129

To the Honoured Knight, Sir
Robert Karre.

SIR,

I Amend to no purpose, nor have any use of this inchoation of health, which I finde, except I preserve my roome, and station in you. I beginne to bee past hope of dying: And I feele that a little ragge of Monte Magor, which I read last time I was in your Chamber, hath wrought prophetically upon mee, which is, that Death came so fast towards mee, that the over-joy of that recovered mee. Sir, I measure not my health by my appetite, but onely by my abilitie to come to kisse your hands: which since I cannot hope in the compasse of a few dayes, I beseech you pardon mee both these intrusions of this Letter, and of that within it. And though Schoole-men dispute, whether a married man dying, and being by Miracle raised again, must bee remarried; yet let your Friendship, (which is a Nobler learning) bee content to admit mee, after this Resurrection, to bee still that which I was before, and shall ever continue,

Your most humble and thankfull
20. Mar. Servant
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 117 (299-300); *T.M.C.* No. 19 (312)

Also in Gosse (II: 15)

Collation

Title:	*To the Honoured Knight, Sir* Robert Karre.	*Letters* (299-300)
	A Letter from the same Person, to a worthie Knight. It consists of much ________ and friendship.	*T.M.C.*, No. 19 (312)

l. 2 health,] health

l. 3 finde] find roome] room

l. 4 beginne] begin bee] be

l. 5 dying: And] dying, and feele] fear

l. 6 ragge] rag *Monte Magor*,] *morti major*

l. 7 I was in your Chamber] I had the honour to be in your Chamber

l. 8 prophetically] propheticallie mee] me

ll. 8-9 which/is, that Death] that Death

l. 9 mee] me

l. 10 that] it mee.] me;

l. 11 Sir] Sir,

l. 12 onely by] onelie

l. 13 hands:] hand;

l. 14 compasse] compass dayes] daies

l. 15 you] you, mee] me

l. 16 intrusions] intrusions,

l. 17 Schoole-men] School-men

l. 19 and being by] and he by Miracle] miracle

l. 20 bee] be remarried] re-married Friendship] friendship

l. 21 Nobler] nobler bee] be

l. 22 mee] me Resurrection] resurrection

l. 23 bee] be

l. 24 continue,] continue.

Your most humble and thankfull]
20 Mar. Servant] Your, &c.
J. Donne.]

Commentary

This letter is to Robert Ker, later Earl of Ancrum, Donne's friend and the recipient of 24 of Donne's letters from the 1651 Letters. Sir Robert Ker was Donne's intermediary to his second cousin of the same name, who was King James's favorite. Donne was in the patronage of Sir Robert Ker (first Viscount Rochester and then Earl of Somerset) from October 1612 (see T.M.C. Letter No. 24, 319-21) until Ker's disgrace, although Ker's failure to secure a secular appointment for Donne by November 1614 caused Donne to decide to seek preferment through the Church. This decision lessened Donne's wish to be dependent on Ker because Donne learned that Ker was not on good terms with the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, and thus Ker's usefulness as a patron to Donne lessened (see Donne's letter to Sir George More of 3 December 1614).

From January 1613 [1612/13] to October 1614, however, Donne's relations with Somerset were at their closest. In this letter Donne apologizes for not paying his respects to Somerset and explains that illness has prevented him. Donne also refers to this same illness in Letters Nos. 50 and 54, which helps date this letter. Donne extravagantly suggests that Somerset's friendship is nobler than marriage and his continued friendship after Donne's illness is nobler than the miracle of a resurrection from death.

The Monte Magor refers to the Portuguese writer Jorge de Montemayor, who wrote a pastoral romance in Castilian, Diana Enamorado, which was extremely popular throughout Europe and had been translated into English by Bartholomew Young in 1598. Shakespeare possibly used it as a source for Two Gentlemen of Verona (Oxford Companion to English Literature [4th ed.], 1967).

130

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

I Sought you yesterday with a purpose of accomplishing my health, by the honour of kissing your hands. But I finde by my going abroad, that as the first Christians were forced to admit some Jewish Ceremonies, onely to burie the Synagogue with honour, so my Feaver will have so much reverence and respect, as that I must keep sometimes at home. I must therefore be bold to put you to the pain of considering me. If therefore my Lord upon your deliverie of my last Letter, said nothing to you of the purpose thereof; let me tell you now, that it was, that in obedience of his commandment, to acquaint him with any thing which might advantage me, I was bold to present that which I heard, which was that Sir D. Carlton was likely to bee removed from Venice, to the States; of which if my Lord said nothing to you, I beseech you adde thus much to your many other Favours, to intreate my Lord at his best commodity, to afford mee the favour of speaking with him. But if hee have already opened himselfe so farre to you, as that you may take knowledge thereof to him, then you may ease him of

> that trouble of giving mee an Audience, by troubling your selfe thus much more, as to tell him in my behalfe, and from mee, that though Sir D. Carlton bee not removed, yet that place with the States lying open, there is a faire field of exercising his favour towards mee, and of constituting a Fortune to mee, and (that which is more) of a meanes for mee to doe him particular services. And Sir, as I doe throughly submit the end and effect of all Projects to his Lordships will, so doe I this beginning thereof, to your Advice and Counsell, if you thinke mee capable of it: as, for your owne sake, I beseech you to doe, since you have admitted mee for
>
> Your humble servant
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 116 (297-99)

Also in Gosse (II: 39-40)

Commentary

This letter is dated by Donne's references to a letter he enclosed to the Earl of Somerset and to his unsuccessful attempt to pay a visit to Sir Robert Ker on the previous day. In this letter Donne states that his illness prevented him from carrying out his visit because his fever became worse when he went out, and explains the contents of the enclosure to Somerset. The enclosed letter to Somerset is TMC No. 18 (311-12). Since the previous letter is dated 20 March, this letter must have been written on March 21. In this letter Donne informs Ker that being ambassador to either Venice or the States (the Hague) would be satisfactory positions for him. Donne's desire for these posts put him in competition with his old friend Sir Henry Wotton, as well as his old patron Sir Robert Drury (see Bald, Life 290-91). Wotton eventually replaced Carleton in Venice, returning to the post he had held earlier, and Carleton returned to his old post at the Hague.

131

A Letter from J.D. to the Lord of Somerset.

IT is now somewhat more than a year, since I took the boldnesse, to make my purpose of professing Divinitie known to your Lordship, as to a person, whom God had made so great an instrument of his providence in this Kingdome, as that nothing in it should be done without your knowledge, your Lordship exercised upon me then many of your vertues, for besides, that by your bounty I have lived ever since, it hath been through your Lordships advice, and inspiration of new hopes into me, that I have lived cheerfullie. By this time, perchance, your Lordship may have discerned, that the malignity of my ill fortune, may infect your good, And that by some impressions in your Lordship, I may be incapable of the favours, which your Lordship had purposed to me. I had rather perish, then be such a rubbe in your fortune, or that through me, your History should have one example of having missed, what you desired; I humbly therefore beg of your Lordship, that after you shall have been pleased, to admit into your memorie, that I am now a year older, broken with some sicknesse, and in the same degrees of honestie as I was, your Lordship will afford me one commandement, and bid me eitheir hope for this businesse in your Lordship's hand, or else pursue my first purpose, or abandon all, for as I cannot live without your favour, so I cannot die without your leave; because even by dying, I should steal from you one, who is by his own devotions and your purchase, your Lordships most humble and thankfull servant.

Source: TMC No. 177 (314)

Also in Gosse (II: 41-42)

Commentary

Walton (Lives 45-46) states that on the death of one of the Clerks of the Council Somerset approached King James about giving Donne the position. This, according to Walton, occurred shortly after Donne had presented King James with a copy of Pseudo-Martyr in 1610. James's response was that he would only prefer Donne through the church. Bald, however, asserts that Walton's story cannot be true because Donne was unknown to Somerset (Viscount Rochester) at that time. Despite Walton's inaccuracies in the circumstances, Bald notes that "such a post was exactly what Donne would be expected to aspire to." For more details see Bald, Life 289-90. Bald's own account, however, provides the evidence to support Walton's story, although Walton had his dates wrong. See the Commentary to Letter No. 111. This letter can be dated by its reference to the duration of Somerset's patronage of Donne, which began in the spring of 1613 (see Bald, Donne and the Drurys 125).

Donne's announcement here of his intention to enter the church was not carried out. He was evidently persuaded by Somerset that secular preferment was forthcoming. Donne's final attempt at state employment occurred with Somerset's assistance during the late spring and summer of 1614. Donne's letters of 28 July and 10 August to Sir Robert More refer to this last attempt. By the fall of 1614 Donne had decided irrevocably to enter the church and had informed Somerset and King James of his intention. He describes visiting the latter to inform him in a letter to Sir George More on 3 December 1614.

132

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,
THE same houre that I received the honour of your commandments, by your letter left at my poore house, I put my selfe upon the way hither. So that I am here in the habite of a Traveller, and (suitable to the rest of my unworthinesses) unfit for great Presences. Therefore, I abstain from waiting upon you presently; besides that in this abstinence, (except I misinterpret the last words of your letter to my advantage) I obey your directions, in sending before I come to you. Howsoever, Sir, I am intirely at your disposing, if you will be pleased to adde this favor to the rest, that I may understand, wherein you will use your Authoritie and Power, which you have over

Your poore and humble servant
John Donne.

Source: Letters No. 104 (278)

Also in Gosse (II: 164)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 164) suggests that this letter belongs with other short letters written to Sir Robert Ker (later Earl of Ancrum) written in the summer of 1622. Gosse, however, misinterprets those letters and is incorrect in including this letter as part of that group. This letter was probably written in 1614, when Donne was pursuing an appointment at court through Sir Robert Ker (later Earl of Ancrum) and his cousin Sir Robert Ker (the Earl of Somerset). In other letters to Sir Robert Ker written in 1614 (Letters No. 118), Donne mentions staying at the Red Lion Inn while awaiting an appointment with Ker. In this letter he implies that he is also waiting in an inn: "I am here in the habit of a Traveller . . . . I obey your directions, in sending before I come to you." Donne's statement that he came the "same houre that I received the honour of your commandments" is more consistent with those letters written to Ker when Donne was seeking preferment than with those written after he had become Dean of St. Paul's, when he was less likely to be able to obey Ker's summons immediately.

133

To the Honourable Knight, Sir
ROBERT KARRE.

Sir,

PErchance others may have told you, that I am relapsed into my Fever; but that which I must intreat you to condole with me, is, that I am relapsed into good degrees of health; your cause of sorrow for that, is, that you are likely to be the more troubled with such an impertinencie, as I am; and mine is, that I am fallen from fair hopes, of ending all; yet I have scaped no better cheap, then that I have paid death one of my Children for my Ransome. Because I loved it well, I make account that I dignifie the memorie of it, by mentioning of it to you, else I should not be so homely. Impute this brevitie of writing to you upon no Subject, to my sicknesse, in which men use to talke idly: but my profession of desiring to bee retained in your memorie, impute to your owne Vertues, which have wrought so much upon

Your humble servant
John Donne.

Source: *Letters* (273-74)

Also in Gosse (II: 45-46)

Commentary

The general time of this letter (1613 or 1614) is fixed by the fact that Donne is writing to Ker about an appointment to see him. It was during this period that Ker and Somerset were attempting to get Donne an appointment at court. The letter can be more precisely dated by Donne's reference to the death of one of his children. While two of Donne's children died in 1614 (Mary Donne was buried on 18 May and Francis was buried on 10 November), this letter must refer to Mary and have been written in May 1614 because Donne mentions his own recurring fever, and in a number of other letters written in the spring of 1614 Donne mentions his recurring fevers.

134

To the Countesse of Bedford.

MADAME,

I Have learn'd by those lawes wherein I am a little conversant, that hee which bestowes any cost upon the dead, obliges him which is dead, but not the heire; I do not therefore send this paper to your Ladyship, that you should thanke mee for it, or thinke that I thanke you in it; your favours and benefits to mee are so much above my merits, that they are even above my gratitude, if that were to be judged by words which must expresse it: But, Madame, since your noble brothers fortune being yours, the evidences also concerning it are yours, so his vertue being yours, the evidences concerning it, belong also to you, of which by your acceptance this may be one peece, in which quality I humbly present it, and as a testimony how intirely your familie possesseth

Your Ladiships most humble
and thankfull servant
JOHN DONNE.

Source: Poems 1633 (139)

Collation

Poems: 1633, 39, 49, 50, 54, 69, 1719

MS: O'Flahertie (O'F)

Title: *To the Countess* of Bedford. 1633 p. 139

To the Countesse of *Bedford*. 1635, 39 p. 255
1649-54 pp. 243-44

To the Countess of *Bedford*. 1669 pp. 242-43

To the Countess of BEDFORD. 1719 pp. 214-15

To the Countesse of Bedford.

Sist^{er} to the L$^{d.}$ Harrington O'F

MADAME,] MADAM 1719 Madame. O'F

l. 1 learn'd] learned 1635-1719 learnt O'F lawes] Laws 1719

l. 2 hee] he 1639-1719 which] w^{ch} O'F
bestowes] bestows 1669 1719

l. 3 which] w^{ch} O'F dead,] dead. 1639 dead O'F
the heire;] his heir; 1669 1719 the heyre. O'F
do] doe 1635-69 O'F

l. 4 your] yo^{r} O'F Ladyship,] Ladiship, 1639-69 La^{pp} O'F
thanke] thank 1719

l. 5 mee] me 1635-1719 thinke] think 1635 1669 1719
thanke] thank 1639-1719 you] yo^{u} O'F it;] it. O'F
your] yo^{r} O'F favours] favo^{rs} O'F

l. 6 mee] me 1635-1719 merits,] merits O'F

l. 7 gratitude,] gratitude; 1719 Gratitude, O'F
be] bee 1635 O'F judged] iudged O'F

l. 8 words] words, 1635-1719 which] w^{ch} O'F expresse] exp^{r}sse
it:] it. 1719 O'F Madame] Madam 1719 your] yo^{r}

l. 9 brothers] brother's 1719 evidences] Evidences O'F

l. 10 yours,] yours: 1635-1719 his] hys O'F
vertue] vertues 1635-69 evidences] Evidences O'F
virtues 1719

l. 11 it,] that 1635-1719 O'F you] yo^{u} O'F which] w^{ch} O'F
your] yo^{r} O'F

l. 12 bee] bee O'F peece,] peece; 1719 Part O'F
which] w^{ch} O'F quality] qualitie 1635-69
present] p^{r}sent O'F

l. 13 intirely] entirely 1719 your] yo^{r} O'F
familie] family 1635-1719 O'F

l. 14 Your] y^{or} Ladiships most] Ladyship's/Most 1719
La$^{pps.}$ most O'F

l. 15 thankfull] thankful 1669 1719 servant] servant, 1635-1719
s^{e}v^{t}. O'F

l. 16 JOHN DONNE.] IOHN DONNE. 1635-69 John Donne O'F

Textual Notes

According to Milgate (*Epithalamion* 196), this letter appears in the following manuscripts:

Dob	Dobell MS.
Lut	*Lutnell*
O'F	O'Flahertie, believed to be a copy of *Lut*
A25	Additional MS. 25707, British Museum
C	Additional MS. 29, Cambridge University Library
D$_{17}$	MS. D$_{25}$ F17, Dyce Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum
JC	John Cave MS. Cave was a contemporary of Donne's.
B	Bridgewater MS. from the Earl of Ellesmere's Library at Bridgewater House
S	Stephens MS.
O$_{1}$	

Miscellanies:

Hk$_1$ Haslewood-Kingsborough MS., first part HM 198, Huntington Library

In *A*$_{25}$ the letter occurs separately forty leaves after the poem with the note 'This was sent wth y^{e} Elegie of the Lorde Harrington' (Milgate, *Epicedes* 196).

In *O'F* the letter precedes the Obsequy and is headed "To the Countess of Bedford. Sister to the L$^{d.}$ Harrington."

This letter was sent to the Countess of Bedford with Donne's funeral poem on her brother entitled "Obsequies to the Lord Harrington." (The title of the poem in the 1633-54 editions of Donne's *Poems* is "Obsequies to the Lord Harringtons brother, To the Countesse of Bedford." This is obviously a mistake. In the Donne manuscripts *C57* and *H49*, the poem is entitled "Obsequies to the Lord Harrington, brother to the Lady Lucy, Countesse of Bedford" (Milgate, *Epithalamion* 66).

Commentary

"John Harington the first Baron of Exton and cousin of Sir John Harington the translator of the *Orlando Furioso*, died at Worms in 1613, when returning home from escorting the Princess Elizabeth to her new home at Heidleberg. His children were John, who succeeded him as Second Baron of Exton, and Lucy, who had become Countess of Bedford in 1594. The young Baron had been an intimate friend of Prince Henry" (Grierson II: 206). Prince Henry, "the hope of the nation," was the eldest son of James I and so described because he was expected to champion the protestant cause in Europe. Prince Henry died in 1612 at the age of eighteen, probably from typhoid fever (Akrigg 136). The second Lord

Harrington grew ill travelling in France and Italy in 1613 and, according to Grierson, was believed poisoned, although Bald (Life 276) states that Lord Harrington died of smallpox. In any event, he returned to England and died at his sister's house on 27 February 1613/14, shortly before his twenty-second birthday (Grierson II: 206). The letter and accompanying funeral poem thus certainly belong to 1614. The Harrington barony became extinct with his death and the larger part of his estates passed to the Countess of Bedford, as Donne indicates in this letter (Gosse II: 43). According to Bald, Donne, "who had been on friendly terms with him [Lord Harrington] for some years, felt a keen sense of personal loss as well as a wish to honour his memory" (Life 276). However, Bald rather inconsistently describes the accompanying prose letter as "a begging letter that was scarcely in the best of taste." Grierson (II: 206) implies that his view of the poem, which he describes as "tasteless," is influenced by his view of the prose letter. Some other critics do not agree with Bald's or Grierson's reading of the prose letter. Isaac I. Elimimian, for example, takes the view that in the prose letter Donne "makes it clear that he is not writing the poem for personal gain" (Elimimian 129), although he does not specify what he bases this view on. Donne's reference to the Countess's inheritance of her "noble brothers fortune," while possibly primarily referring to her "position in life" (O.E.D., 1600), must also have referred to her increased wealth since the two are interdependent (O.E.D., 1596), in which case Donne's expectation of payment appears undeniable. Elsewhere in a prose letter to Goodyer, Donne comments that "nothing doth so innocently provoke new graces, as gratitude" (Poems, 1633, 354). With the exception of The Anniversaries, the funeral poem for Lord Harrington was the longest Donne wrote (258 lines); the next longest is the "Elegy on Prince Henry" (98 lines).

135

Doctor Donne to the same Lord [Lord Hay], requesting a Courtesie.

THough I had much desire to seek your Lordship, yet I abstained when I knew, upon how just reason your Lordship had retired your self. But since your Lordship hath given so able a triall of your excellencie that you can suspend your Servant's grief, and make it yeeld to publique joy, and triumph, I dare appear before your Lordship in this Letter, and repeat that suite, which I made to your Lordship last year. I humblie therefore beseech your Lordship, to take some time to move his Majestie before he go out of Town, that I may be his servant: which request, though I hope you shall not find difficult, nor unseasonable, yet I preferre it to your Lordship, without any restraint of time or place, or other circumstance; and having told your Lordship my desire, leave all the rest to your leisure and knowledge: for my fortune is no where so safe as in your Lordships hands, which I humblie kisse, and deliver over into them the faith and services of

Your most humble Servant.

Source: TMC No. 188 (335)

Also in Gosse (II: 85)

Commentary

This letter follows a letter in the Tobie Mathews Collection from Lord Hay to Doctor Donne. Gosse (II: 85) dates Lord Hay's letter New Year's Day 1615 (i.e., March 25) and suggests that this letter of Donne's follows in a "slightly later period." Bald, however, dates Hay's letter immediately after Donne's ordination, which took place on 23 January 1614/15. The evidence in the letter which suggested New Year's Day 1615 to Gosse must be the sentence which announces Hay's gift of clerical vestments to Donne: "If on this day I present you with a vesture of that profession and a token from my office [Hay was Master of the Great Wardrobe], Take it as an argument of my faithfull well-wishing all the year long, of your more substantiall good fortune." However, Bald is probably correct in interpreting "this day" as the day of Donne's ordination. Donne was reluctantly made a Doctor of Divinity by Cambridge on 7 April 1615, but since Donne is referred to as Doctor Donne in all of the letters of the *Tobie Mathews Collection*, no matter what their date, his title is of no use in dating Hay's letter.

If Gosse is wrong in connecting the two letters, in part because of the date of Lord Hay's letter to Donne, he is also wrong to connect this letter with Donne's wish to be a Royal Chaplain. In a letter to Wotton in the Burley-on-the-Hill manuscript (f. 255), Donne states: "for I do not so much as enquire of myne owne hopes what the K. will do wth me: Hee forbad me at first and I obey him still, and forebeare so much as to remember him that hee forbadd mee." Bald (*Life* 307) suggests that Donne was almost at once appointed Chaplain-in-Ordinary and may have accompanied the King to Cambridge in that capacity to receive his doctorate.

Bald (*Life* 292, n. 2) suggests that this letter contains a reference to the illness of Hay's wife, which shortly after resulted in her death (Hay's "just reason" for retiring himself). If so, the letter must be dated July 1614. This date is consistent with Donne's request to Hay to intercede with King James for the position of Clerk of the Council which, as this letter indicates, Donne had been pursuing since the previous year (see Donne's letter to Somerset dated after 22 July 1613).

136

To the right wor: S^r
Robert More Knight
At Lothesley.

S^r

Our predecessors were neuer so conquered by y^e Danes as I ame at thys tyme. for theyr comminge haue put my little Court busines out of y^e way, and dispossessed me of so neer hopes, as lackd litle of possession I must confes my weaknes in thyr behalfe; no man attends court fortunes w^t more impatience then I do. I esteeme nothinge more inexcusable, then to attend them chargeably, nor any expence so chargeable as that of tyme. I ame so angry at theyr comminge, that I haue not so much as inquir'd why they came. But they are euen w^t mee; for, in truthe, they came for nothinge. Statesmen, who can finde matter of state, in any wrinckle in y^e kings socks, thinke that he came for y^e busines of Cleue. but whether for hys brother Saxon or [h]ys Cousin Brandenbourge, I do not hear that he can tell. And the low-Country men, thys last year, did hym such an affront, at hys great Custome-place, the Sondt that some thinke he comes to understand o^r kings disposition in y^t busines, if he ^{shall} go about to right himselfe vpon them. Others thinke he came to correct o^r enormity of yellow bands by presentinge as many, of blew. for my particular opinion, I thinke, he came to defeat mee, and retard my busines. He came vpon fryday, and he goes vpon monday; and these two termes limit are hys history; for he doth nothinge between. He hath brought w^t hym hys Chanceler, and hys Admirall; and ys otherwise well attended. He shipd 100 horse; but sent [th]em back, after he had been a day at sea. He pretended [to] go into Germany; but after he was at sea, he disco[v]rd hys purpose; and accordingly left a commission for y^e [go]uerment, to be opened, after he had beene certaine [d]ayes away. The rest of hys history yo^w may finde, I [thi]nke, in some part of Amadis y^e Gaule, at yo^r leysure. [I] wyll not contribute so much to myne own ill fortune [t]o ioyne w^t her in a treason against myself, so much [as] to be absent now, when my absence may give perchance

action, perchance excuse to others of slacknes in my busines.
therfore I haue neglected my pleasure, and y^{e} litle circum-
[sta]nce of my health, (for in good faythe, my lyfe yt
wi[se] ys no great Circumstance to mee, w^{ch} I intended by
[go]inge into y^{e} Country. Therefor, S^{r}, I send backe yo^{r} horse,
[in] as good case, as so [l]onge rest in y^{e} Coven garden
[ca]n make hym. If I finde yt necessary to go, I wyll
[be] bold to aske yo^{w} by an expresse messenger againe
[w]ether yo^{w} can spare him then, or no. y^{r} poore sister
[rem]embers her loue to yo^{r} selfe and all yo^{r} company. So ^{do} I,
who ame euer y^{rs} to be commanded
J. DONNE

[At my poor] [hos]pitall
[28 July] i6i4
To the right wor: S^{r}
Robert More knight
At Lothesley

Source: Folger MS L.b. 537 (Beal No. 16)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 46-47)

Notes

l. 14 ye busines of Cleue [Cleves]: The Duchy of Cleves was part of the disputed territory in the struggle between Protestant and Catholic factions in Germany. The quarrel over Cleves was building up again at this time.

l. 15 hys brother Saxon or hys Cousin Brandenbourge: members of the Protestant faction in Germany and allies of the King of Denmark

l. 18 the Sondt (the Sound): the mouth of the Baltic Sea. The King of Denmark controlled all trade that passed through the Sondt.

l. 33 Amadis y^{e} Gaule: See also Letter No. 78 (To Mrs. Bridget White) for another reference to Amadis the Gaul, the Spanish or Portuguese romance which was one of the most popular of the genre.

l. 42 Coven garden: Covent Gardens, where Donne boarded Sir Robert More's horse

Commentary

Donne refers to the unexpected visit of Christian IV of Denmark, brother of Queen Ann, who appeared in the Thames on 22 July 1614. Christian's visit was not officially arranged, and as Donne indicates in this letter, there were various attempts to explain it. Akrigg (84) suggests that Christian may have come to see if he could improve Ann's position. Her letters to her brother show that her relations with James were not happy and she was furious over indignities she suffered from some members of the Court, notably the Earl of Northhampton. Perhaps by the time of Christian's visit Ann's position had improved slightly, because Northhampton had died the previous month (June 4) (Akrigg 214). James was on a summer progress which was to take him to Rutlandshire, but returned to London immediately to entertain Christian, who remained in England until August 5th.

137

To my very worthy friend M^r George Gerrard.

SIR,

THis is the fourth of this moneth, and I receive your Pacquet so late, that I have scarce waking time enough to tell you so, or to write any thing but dreams. I have both your Letters, mother and daughter, and am gladder of them, then if I had the mother and daughter here in our neighbourhood; you know I mean Sir H. Gooderes parties. Sir, you do me double honour when my name passes through you to that Noble Lady in whose presence you are. It is a better end and a better way to that then I am worth. I can give you nothing in recompense of that favor, but good counsell: which is to speake sparing-

ly of any ability in me, lest you indanger
your own reputation, by overvaluing me.
If I shall at any time take courage by your
Letter, to expresse my meditations of
that Lady in writing, I shall scarce think
lesse time to be due to that employment,
then to be all my life in making those
verses, and so take them with me and sing
them amongst her fellow Angels in Heaven.
I should be loath that in any thing of
mine, composed of her, she should not
appear much better then some of those of
whom I have written. And yet I cannot
hope for better expressings then I have given
of them. So you see how much I
should wrong her, by making her but
equall to others. I would I could be beleeved,
when I say that all that is written of
them, is but prophecy of her. I must use
your favour in getting her pardon, for
having brought her into so narrow, and
low-rooft a room as my consideration, or
for adventuring to give any estimation of
her, and when I see how much she can
pardon, I shall the better discern how far
farther I may dare to offend in that kinde.
My noble neighbour is well, and makes
me the steward of his service to you. Before
this Letter reaches you, I presume you
will bee gathering towards these parts,
and then all newes will meet you so
fast, as that out of your abundance you
will impart some to

Your affectionate friend to
serve you
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 94 (259-61)

Also in Gosse (I: 294-95)

Notes

1. 9 Sir H. Gooderes parties: By 1614 Goodyer was in the service of the Countess of Huntington. Donne had written two verse letters to the Countess of Huntington and knew her and her mother, the Countess of Derby, from the time of her marriage in 1601 to Sir Thomas Egerton.

Milgate (242) states that Donne mentions the Countess of Huntington "with respect and affection at various periods" after 1605 (e.g., Letters, pp. 169, 200, 236). The reference here may also be of a more personal relationship of Goodyer's.

Commentary

This letter can be dated precisely because Donne refers to writing on "the fourth of this moneth" and thanks Garrard for praising him to "that Noble Lady in whose presence you are." Garrard was part of Prince Henry's household until his death on 6 November 1612. By 1614 he had entered the service of the Earl and Countess of Salisbury.

Donne wrote a verse letter in August 1614 to the Countess of Salisbury at Garrard's request (the date of the poem is included as the subtitle). Since the prose letter clearly refers to Donne's preparations for writing this verse letter, the month and year must be the same for both. Moreover, as Bald (Life 271) points out, the verse letter develops the same theme as the prose letter: that Donne would like to speak more highly of the Countess of Salisbury than of some other ladies that he has praised, but he has already expressed himself as well as he could; therefore, he hopes he will be believed when he says that all he wrote of others is but a prophecy of her. The Countess of Salisbury (Lady Catherine Howard) was the youngest daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Suffolk, and of his second wife. She was the sister of the notorious Frances Howard, Countess of Essex and later Countess of Salisbury, who was convicted of the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. In 1608 Catherine Howard married William Cecil, second Earl of Salisbury and grandson of Lord Burleigh.

138

To the right wor: S^{r}
Robert More knight
at Lothesley

S^{r}
Since I had no other thinge in contemplation
when I purposed thys iourney, then my health,
me thinks yt ys a kinde of phisick, to be so
longe about that; and I grow weary of phi-
sick quickly. I haue therfor put of that pur-
pose; at least tyll the k: come into these parts.
If yo^{r} horse, (w^{ch} I returne by thys carryer
of Gilford) haue not found as good salads in
o^{r} Covent garden, as he should at Lothesley,
yet I beleeve he hath had more ease, then he
should haue had there. we are condemned to thys
desart of London for all thys summer: for yt
ys Company not houses w^{ch} distinguishes between
Cityes, and desarts. when I began to apprehend,
that euen to myselfe, who can releive myselfe
vpon books, solitarines was a litle burdenous, I
beleeud yt would be much more so, to my wyfe,
if shee were left alone. So much company
therfor, as I ame, shee shall not want: and wee
had not one another at so cheape a rate, as y^{t}
we should euer be weary of one another. S^{r},
when these places affoord any thinge worthe yo^{r}
knowledge, I shall be yo^{r} Referendary. Now, my
errand ys onely to deliuer my thanks and
services accompanyed w^{t} yo^{r} poor sisters, to yo^{r}
selfe, and all yo^{r} good Company.
10 Aug: 16i4 y^{rs} euer to be commanded
J. DONNE

I pray S^{r} giue thys Note enclosed to my lady, yo^{r} Mother.
it ys of some parcells w^{ch} she commanded my wife to buy
for her w^{ch} are sent down, at thys tyme, by y^{e} carryar.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 539 (Beal No. 17)

Other transcriptions: Loseley MSS. (344-45)

Gosse (II: 47-48)

Transcription Notes

The postscript occupies three lines down the left-hand margin of the letter. The line lengths are retained.

Commentary

This letter to Sir Robert More indicates that Donne remained unsuccessful in his attempts to see the king which were begun in July and related in the July 28 letter to Sir Robert More. Donne's letter again accompanies the return of Sir Robert's horse to him, as does the earlier letter, so Donne must have reborrowed it in the meantime. Donne's postscript suggests that he eventually established a close relationship with the entire More family.

139

To my very much respected friend M^{r}.
George Garrard.

SIR,
I Thank you for expressing your love to
me, by this diligence, I know you can
distinguish between the voyces of my love,
and of my necessity, if any thing in my
Letters sound like an importunity. Besides,
I will adde thus much out of counsell to
you, that you can do nothing so thriftily as
to keep in your purpose the payment of the
rest of this years rent, (though at your con-
veniency) for Sir E.H. curiosity being so
served at first, I shall be no farther cause,
but that the rest be related, and you in as
good possession of his love, and to as good
use, as your love deserves of him. You
mocke us when you aske news from hence.
All is created there, or relates thither where
you are. For that book which you com-
mand me to send, I held it but half an hour:
which served me to read those few leafes,
which were directed upon some few lines
of my book. If you come to town quick-
ly, you may get a fair widow: for Mris
Brown is fallen to that state by death of her
husband. No man desires your comming
more, nor shall be readier to serve you, then
Your affectionate friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 108 (283-84)

Also in Gosse (II: 50-51)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 50-51) places this letter among others written by Donne in August of 1614. Although Gosse does not comment specifically on his reason for this, it must be that he links this letter with Donne's verse letter to the Countess of Salisbury, which was written in August 1614. Garrard had been in Prince Henry's household until his death in 1612. He subsequently found a place in the service of the young Earl of Salisbury's household, where he acted as an intermediary between Donne and the Countess of Salisbury in much the same way as Goodyer did with the Countess of Huntington.

There are several sentences in this letter that suggest the verse letter. The opening sentence might suggest that Donne expects Garrard to warn him if any of his letters might displease the Countess. Secondly, Donne's assertion that Garrard mocks him when he asks for news from London because "All is created there, or relates thither where you are" repeats the flattery expressed in Donne's verse letter to the Countess that she is God's example of "faire, great, good" for the world. The Countess of Salisbury, Lady Catherine Howard, was the younger sister of Frances Howard, wife of Donne's patron at this time, the Earl of Somerset. The opportunity to write a verse letter for the Countess of Salisbury was obviously an indirect way of pleasing Salisbury.

The reference to Sir E.H. is probably to Sir Edward Herbert, although the subject of his curiosity remains obscure.

Donne's reference to the book Garrard asks for must be to Thomas Fitzherbert's A Supplement to the Discussion of M. D. Barlowes Answere, which was published in 1613 and which contains twenty pages refuting Donne's book Pseudo-Martyr, which defended James's Oath of Allegiance. The identity of the widow Mrs. Brown is unknown. Donne declines to discuss Goodyer's interest in an unnamed widow in a letter to him written on 14 March 1614 because it was "not a subject for a feverous mans consideration" (Letter No. 126), and in another letter to Garrard he declines to help Garrard meet a woman he finds attractive.

140

To the Honourable Knight Sir H.G.
[Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

AFter I have told you, that the Lady Hay dyed last Tuesday, and that to her end she was anguished with the memory of the execution of that fellow which attempted her in the coach. I have told you all which hath fallen out here. Except between you and me that may be worth the telling, that my L. Chancellor gave me so noble and so ready a dispatch; accompanied with so fatherly advice, and remorse for my fortunes, that I am now, like an Alchymist, delighted with discoveries by the way, though I attain not mine end. It spent me so little time after your going, that, although you speak in your Letter of good dispatch in your going, yet I might have overtaken you. And though perchance if I had gone, it might have been inconvenient for me, to have put my self into my L. Chamberlains presence, if that sicknesse be earnest at Ashby, and so I should nothing have advanced my businesse, yet I should have come to that noble Lady with better confidence, and more assurance of a pardon, when I had brought a conscience, that I came despoiled of all

> other respects, only to kisse her hands, in whose protection I am, since I have, nor desire other station, then a place in her good opinion. I took so good contentment in the fashion which my L. Chancellor used towards me, that out of a voluptuous loathnesse to let that taste go out of my mouth, I forbear to make any further tryall in that businesse till the King come into these quarters. So that, Sir, I am here in place to serve you, if either I be capable of your commandements, or this town give any thing worth the writing. As often as you see your noble friend, and her good sister, allow my name a room in your discourse, it is a short one, and you will soon have done. But tell them not my desire to do them service, for then you engage your self in a longer discourse, then I am worthy. Only in pursuit of your commandment I sent the Paquet to the Post, for in mine own understanding, there should appear small hope of arriving by that way, except you know otherwise that the LL. mean to make some stay in their return, in those parts: but the Letter is brought back again, for the Post went away yesterday, and they knew of no occasion of sending till next week. Therefore except I can inform my self of some good means, I will retain it, till I have a fresh commandment from you. I see M. Taverner still in this town, the Lady Carey went from hence but yesterday. I am in some perplexity what to doe with this pacquet, till some good fortune, or your Letters clear me.
>
> Aug. 19. Your humble servant
>
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 55 (171-74)

Also in Gosse (II: 49-50)

Commentary

Donne's letter contains more general and personal news than usual. The Lady Hay was the Lady Honora Denny, the wife of Sir James Hay, one of Donne's closest friends, who was later made Lord Doncaster and then Earl of Carlisle. Her death indicates the year the letter was written. She was assaulted and robbed of her jewels as she was returning home late at night. She suffered a miscarriage and died not long afterwards (Bald, Life 332). The L. Chancellor was Donne's old employer Sir Thomas Egerton, now Lord Ellesmere. Donne thus apparently had the backing of Somerset, Lord Hay, and Egerton in his pursuit of the position of clerk of the council. The Lord Chamberlain was the Earl of Somerset, who succeeded his father-in-law, Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, in that office in July 1614 after Suffolk was appointed Lord Treasurer (Akrigg 187). Whatever sickness was current at Ashby, the residence of the Countess of Huntington, in whose household Goodyer served, must have been communicable (perhaps the plague?), and Donne's letter suggests that he must have been there recently and could be regarded as a possible carrier of the illness. The "noble friend" of Goodyer's and "her good sister" must refer to Elizabeth, Countess of Huntington, and one of her older sisters, either Anne, the eldest, who married Lord Chandos in 1608, or Francis, the second, who married John Egerton in 1601 or 1602 (Bald, Life 110). The three sisters were known to Donne from his days as secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton. Egerton had married their mother, the Countess of Derby, in October 1600 and the young ladies, with their mother, came to live at York House while Donne was still in Egerton's employ. Perhaps this early familiarity with the ladies led Donne to pun on his name here: "allow my name a room in your discourse, it is a short one, and you will soon have done." The rest of the letter consists of material of less interest to Donne: Lady Carey (the wife of Sir George Carey of Cockington) has left London. She later married Sir Arthur Lake, the son of Sir Thomas Lake, the Secretary of State. Bald (Life 249) suggests that Donne's friend Richard Martin may have been her lover. M. Taverner (Jasper Taverner, a London property owner who had dealings with the Drurys) (Bald, *Donne and the Drurys* 164, 120) has not left London; Donne is worried about what to do with a packet of letters Goodyer has sent him to distribute that he is unable to forward.

141

To my worthy and honoured friend M^{r} George
Garet [Garrard].

SIR,

I Am sorry, if your care of me have made you importune to any body else; yet I cannot be very sorry because it gives new testimonies of your favour to me, of which I shall ever be very glad, and (that which is my onely vertue) thankfull: so desperate fortunes as mine, may well make friends loth to doe curtesies, because an inability in deserving or requiting, takes from them the honour of having done a curtesie, and leaves it but the poor name of an alms: and alms may be given in easier proportions, and more meritoriously. But S^{r}, by what name or weight soever you esteem this kindnesse which you have done me, I value it so, as might alone perswade me of your care of me; in recompense of which, you must be pleased to accept new assurances that I am

Your very affectionate servant,
J. Donne.

I pray let my service be presented by you to M^{r} Roope.

Source: *Letters* No. 13 (37-38)

Also in Gosse (II: 48)

Notes

Postscript: Mr. Roope] Donne's servant, Mr. Roper (see Bald, *Life* 400-01, for a description of Roper's duties and Donne's legacy to him).

Commentary

This letter appears to follow *Letters* No. 108 to Garrard. In that letter Donne also refers to importunities; however, there he suggests that Garrard will protect him from making them himself. In this letter Garrard has apparently made Donne's appeal successful and Donne thanks Garrard for his help, especially if he has had to importune others on Donne's behalf. Donne's apologies for being unable to respond properly to Garrard's kindness indicate that the letter was written before Donne had any certain expectations of any kind of preferment and is consistent with his uncertainty in August of 1614 when he vacillated over pursuing James into the country. Donne finally decided to wait until he returned to London.

142

"*To* Sir Nicholas Carew.

S^r
I haue worne out my horses in y^e progresse, and since, that I cannot, as I
thought to haue donne. come over to see yo^w. And besides I ame forced to
intreat a fauor at yo^r hands; w^{ch} ys, that if it be no inconvenience unto yo^w,
yo^w would let thys horse w^{ch} my man leads runne in yo^r parke. but if
yo^r other frinds haue overcharged yo^w, w^t importunityes of yt kinde, I pray
let not me add to yt by my unmannerlynes. I made y^e more hast to send now,
because yesterday I heard of a dangerous fall yt yo^r second sonne had
taken, and was very desirous (as I hope I shall) to hear of hys amendment.
And so, S^r, w^t my humble thanks for all yor former fauours to me and y^e re=

membrance of my Service to yo^{r} good Lady. and my prayers to o^{r} B. Savyor
to blesse yo^{w} and yo^{rs}, in thys, and y^{e} next world, I rest
yor poor frinde and
Servant, in Chr: Jes:
J: DONNE.
Sept: i7. At my house
at Drury house.

Source: British Library MS 29598, f. 15 (Beal No. 29)

Also in Gosse (II: 209-10), taken from the Domestic State Papers

Facsimile in Keynes, (*Bibliography*, 1958; facing 123)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 210) dates this letter 1624, apparently because he links it with another letter of Donne's to Carew dated 1 September 1624. He suggests that Donne inadvertently used his old address at Drury House instead of "my house at St. Paul's." Donne, however, has indicated in a number of letters to Sir Robert More that he was borrowing his horse to follow King James while making his last effort to obtain secular preferment during the summer and fall of 1614. It is quite possible that Donne lodged this borrowed horse with another brother-in-law, Sir Nicholas Carew. This letter then should be dated 17 September 1614 and the address is correct. See Letters No. 136 and 138.

143

To Sir William Trumbull 10 September 1614

S^{r}, Not vpon my strength, but vpon my L: chandos hys
Interest. I ame bolde accordinge to hys direction to addresse
as many letters, as come to my hands for hym, to yo^{rs}.
w^{ch} boldnes w^{d} yo^{w} pardon in mee, yo^{w} do a new curtesy to
yor poore frinde to do
yo^{w} service
J: DONNE
20 Sept.
16i4.

Source: Facsimile from Sotheby's Sale Catalogue (Trumbull Papers), 14 December 1989, Item 15 (Beal No. 18)

Commentary

This letter belongs to the period when Donne, under the patronage of the Earl of Somerset, was making his last attempt to secure state employment. By November 1614, Donne had decided to enter the church and informed James of his decision around the end of that month.

The letter was sent to Sir William Trumbull, who was at this time one of the clerks of the council. (He had been appointed the fourth Clerk-in-Ordinary at the beginning of 1614, having paid ₤300 for the place to Sir Thomas Edmunds, who presumably had a grant in reversion (Bald, Life 290 and 290, n. 1). Trumbull had previously been the English agent in Brussels.

Grey Brydges, fifth Baron Chandos (1579?-1621), was one of the king's favorite courtiers who had earlier served in the Low Countries during the Juliers campaign. A number of signed autograph letters from Chandos to Trumbull are among the Trumbull papers, some mentioning postal arrangements (Trumbull Papers Miscellaneous Correspondence IV: 81; VI: 76, 79, 80. 86 [Sotheby's Sale Catalogue 47]). As of 1991 there is no British Library numbering.

144

[To Sir George More]

S^{r}
I returnd not tyll yesternight from my expensive iourney
to Newmarket. where I haue receyvd from y^{e} kinge as good
allowance, and encuragement to pursue my purpose as I
could desire. whilst I was there I found y^{t} my L: chamber-
lane, refus'd to swear a Gent: into a place of Grolme of
y^{e} chamber, after he had bargaind for yt, because he
was a servant to my L: of Canterbury. Thys, and some
other lights make me see that matters stand not so well
between them but y^{t} are likely to oppose one anothers
[d]ependants. Before I go about to seeke my L: of Canter-
bury I would gladly, if I could, disurve hys inclination to
me and ~~if~~ whether he haue any coniecture vpon my relation
to my L: chamberl: w$^{ch}{}_{x}$ ys [be] very likely to haue come to hys
knowledge, since my goinge by reason of hys Lordships more open
avowinge me then hertofor. If therfore, y^{ow} haue taken
any occasion to speake w^{t} hys Grace, since I desired y^{t} fauer
of yo^{w} and haue perceyud any thinge therby, w^{ch} yo^{w} thinke
fytt y^{t} I should know before yo^{r} comminge hether, I humbly
beseeche yo^{w} to let me understand yt, when any servant of
yo^{rs} hath reason to come to London: yt I may use my best
meanes of disposinge hym towards yt. My L: chamb: hath
layd hys commandement vpon y^{e} M^{r} of Requests, to forbear
to moue y^{e} K: in y^{e} other busines, for any man; though I saw
y^{e} Byll from y^{e} kings hands, and saw yt it was styll earnestly
pursued out of Yorkhouse. Hys Lp hath assurd me, that
yt shall sleepe tyll I move hym to sett yt afoote heraf-
ter when my sonne, or any for mee ^{may} haue profit therby.w^{t}
w^{ch} purpose I wyll acquaint my L: $\hat{c}$hanceler, and humbly in-
treat hym, yt it may be so. And so S^{r} w^{t} my humble duty to
yo^{w}, and yo^{r} poore daughters, I leaue yo^{w} to o^{r} most blessed Sa-
uyor.   yors euer to be commanded
J. DONNE

[3 December]
16i4

Source: Folger MS L.b. 538 (Beal No. 19)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 60-61)

Transcription Notes

1.5 Grolme: Groom? of the bedchamber

3 December appears in the left margin immediately in front of the third-last line of the body of the letter.

16i4 follows beneath 3 December on the second-last line in front of yow

(3 December - treat . . .)
(16i4   yo^{w}).

Commentary

This letter refers to different business than Donne describes in his letters of July 28 and August 10, 1614, to Sir Robert More, which was Donne's last attempt at state employment. In November Donne decided to enter the church and this letter describes his announcement of his intentions to the king. Beal entitles this letter to Sir George *or* Sir Robert More, but internal evidence suggests that the letter was written to Sir George More. Donne closes the letter by offering his "humble duty to yo^{w} and yo^{r} poore daughters." Donne here is not offering his duty to the recipient of the letter and to the recipient's daughters; he is passing along an address from Anne More to her father. If the elliptical construction were written out it would read "And so S^{r} *w^{t}* my humble duty to yo^{w}, and yo^{r} poore daughter[']s [humble duty to you], I leaue yo^{w} . . . ," obviously appropriate for Sir George More and not for Sir Robert More.

Donne expresses his concern to Sir George More about his chances for an appointment because of the conflict between the Duke of Somerset (the Lord Chamberlain) and the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot. Somerset was a patron of Donne's, and Donne feared that if the Archbishop knew about this patronage, he would oppose Donne's preferment in the church. Donne also mentions an unsigned grant for an unidentified preferment promised him by Somerset. Somerset's fall a year later apparently meant the promise was never fulfilled (Bald, *Life* 294).

145

To the Honourable Knight H.G. [Goodyer]

SIR,

YOur Son left here a Letter for me, from you. But I neither discern by it that you have received any of mine lately; which have been many, and large, and too confident to be lost, especially since, (as I remember) they always conveyed others to that good Lady; neither do I know where to finde, by any diligence, your sons lodging. But I hope he will apprehend that impossibility in me, and finde me here, where he shall also finde as much readinesse to serve him, as at Polesworth. This Letter of yours makes me perceive, that that Lady hath expressed her purpose to you in particular, for the next term. Accordingly, I make my promises: for since one that meant but to flatter, told an Emperour, that his benefits were to be reckoned from the day of the promise, because he never failed, it were an injury from me to the constancy of that noble Lady, if I should not, assoon as she promises, do some act of assurance of the performance; which I have done, as I say, in fixing times to my creditors; for by the end of next terme, I will make an end with the world, by Gods grace. I lack you here, for my L. of Dorset, he might make a cheap bargain with me now, and disingage his honour, which in good faith, is a little bound, because he admitted so many witnesses of his large disposition towards me. They are preparing for a Masque of Gentlemen: in which M. Villars is, and M. Karre, whom I told you before my L. Chamberlain had brought into the bed-chamber. I pray, if you make not so thick goings as you used, send this Letter to that good woman, for it is not only mine. If I could stay this Letter an hour, I should send you something of Savoy, for Sir Rob. Rich, who is now come from Court, hath laid a commandment upon me by message to waite upon him; and I know his busines, because he never sought me, but in one kinde. But the im-

portunity of the houre excuses me, and delivers you from further trouble from
13 Decemb. Your very true friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 48 (148-50)

Also in Gosse (II: 64-65)

Transcription Notes

1. 46 importunity (p. 149) / importuny (p. 150): This word carries over from the last line on p. 149, where the word is spelled correctly. The completion of the word on p. 150 is spelled "importuny."

Commentary

This letter, along with others from the fall and early winter of 1614, deals with Donne's decision and preparations to enter the church. The "noble lady" Donne refers to is the Countess of Bedford, who offered to pay his debts on his entering the church, but later disappointed him by the amount of money she gave him (see Letters No. 78, 218-20). Donne suggests that Goodyer might help him get the Earl of Dorset also to contribute to paying his debts, as the Earl had earlier promised. Donne remained friendly with the Earl of Dorset, so presumably he eventually contributed something.

As Donne indicates, Goodyer's son (John) delivered the letter. Polesworth was the name of Sir Henry Goodyer's estate in Warwickshire.

According to Gosse (II: 66), the "Masque of Gentlemen" was Ben Jonson's Mercury vindicated from the Alchemists at Court. M. Villiers is, of course, George Villiers, who replaced Somerset as the king's favorite. He had been at court only since the previous August (Gosse

II: 64). M. Karre (Ker) was Somerset's second cousin and Donne's friend and the recipient of many Donne letters. He acted as intermediary between Donne and Somerset. Somerset was the Lord Chamberlain at the time of the letter.

Sir Robert Riche, whom Donne had met at Amiens in 1611/12, had accompanied Sir Henry Wotton on an embassy to Savoy during that trip to the Continent (Bald, Life 248). Donne's reference to Riche here suggests that he had a continued interest in Savoy, perhaps on behalf of King James.

146

To the honourable Knight Sir H.G.
[Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

SInce I received a Letter by your sonne, whom I have not yet had the honour to see, I had a Letter Pacquet from you by M^{r} Roe: To the former, I writ before: In this I have no other commandement from you, but to tell you, whether M^{r} Villers have received from the K. any additions of honour, or profit. Without doubt he hath yet none. He is here, practising for the Mask; of which, if I mis-remember not, I writ as much as you desire to know, in a Letter which seems not, to have been come to you, when you writ. In the Savoy business, the King hath declared himself by an engagement, to assist him with 100000^{l} a year, if the Warre continue. But I beleeve, he must farm out your Warwickshire Benevolence for the paiment thereof. Upon the strength of this engagement, Sir Rob. Rich becomes confident in his hopes. If you stood in an equall disposition for the West, and onely forbore, by reason of M^{r} Martins silence, I wonder; for I think, I told you, that he was gone; and I saw in Sir Tho. Lucies hand, a Letter from him to you,

which was likely to tell you as much.
Since I came from Court, I have stirred very little: Now that the Court comes again
to us, I may have something which you
may be content to receive from
18 Decemb. Your very affectionate servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 63 (191-90) (sic: 191 is misnumbered as 190).

Also in Gosse (II: 66)

Commentary

This letter, dated 18 December, continues the topics discussed in the previous letter of 13 December, i.e., Ben Jonson's masque, George Villiers' fortunes, and the king's relations with the Duke of Savoy, which Donne learned about from Sir Robert Riche. The matter in which Goodyer "onely forebore by reason of M^{r} Martins silence" remains obscure. The "Mr. Martin" was Goodyer's and Donne's friend Richard Martin.

147

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
I Writ to you yesterday taking the boldnesse to put a letter into the good Ladies
pacquet for you. This morning I had this
new occasion of writing, that Sir Tho. Roe,
who brought this inclosed Letter to me,
and left it unsealed, intreated me to take the
first opportunity of sending it. Besides that
which is in that letter (for he read it to me)
I came to the knowledg in Yorkhouse that my
L. Chancellor hath been moved, and incensed against you; and asking Sir Tho. Roe,
if he were directly or occasionally any cause
of that, he tells me thus much, that Sir W.
Lover, and Sir H. Carey, have obtained of
my L. to have a Pursevant, and consequently a Serjeant sent into the Countrey for you.

My L. grounds this earnestnesse against you, upon some refusing to appear upon processe which hath been taken out against you. And I perceive Sir Ed. Eston, and both the other, admit consultations, of ways by petition to the King, or Counsail, or L. Chamberlain, or any other. The great danger, obliquely likely to fall, is that when it comes to light, how you stand towards M. Mathew, you may lose the ease which you have by colour of that extent, and he may lose the benefit, of having had so much of his estate concealed. You will therefore at least pardon my advising you, to place those sums, which by your retiring I presume you do imploy upon payment of debts, in such places as that these particular friends be not forced to leave being so. I confesse, the going about to pay debts, hastens importunity. I finde in my self, that where I was not asked money before, yet when I offered to pay next Terme, they seem loth to afford me that time, which might justly have been desperate before: but that which you told me out of the Countrey, with the assistance which I hope to finde here, (especially if your indevour may advance it at Dorset house) I hope will inable me to escape clamor, and an ill conscience, in that behalf. One thing more I must tell you; but so softly, that I am loath to hear my self: and so softly, that if that good Lady were in the room, with you and this Letter, she might not hear. It is, that I am brought to a necessity of printing my Poems, and addressing them to my L. Chamberlain. This I mean to do forthwith; not for much publique view, but at mine own cost, a few Copies. I apprehend some incongruities in the resolution; and I know what I shall suffer from many interpretations: but I am at an end, of much considering that; and, if I were as startling in that kinde, as ever I was, yet in this particular, I am under an unescapable necessity, as I shall let you perceive, when I see you. By this occasion I am made a Rhapsoder of mine own rags, and that cost me more diligence, to seek them, then it did to make them. This made me aske to borrow that old book of you, which it will be too late to see, for that use, when I see you: for I must do this, as a valediction to the world, before I take Orders. But this is it, I am to aske you; whether you ever made any such use of the letter in verse, *A nostre Countesse chez vous*, as that I may not put it in, amongst the rest to persons of that rank; for I desire very very much, that something should bear her name in the book, and I would be just to my written words to my L. *Harrington*, to write nothing after that. I pray tell me as soon as you can, if I be at liberty to insert that: for if you have by any occasion applied any pieces of it, I see not, that it will be discerned, when it appears in the whole piece. Though this be a little matter, I would be sorry not to have an account of it, within as little after Newyears tide, as you could. I have something else to say, of M. *Villars*, but because I hope to see you here shortly, and because new additions, to the truths or rumours, which concern him, are likely to be made by occasion of this Masque, I forbear to send you the edition of this Mart, since I know it will be augmented by the next: of which, if you prevent it not by comming, you shall have, by letter an account from

Vigilia S^{t}. Tho.
1614.

Your very affectionate
friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 65 (194-98)

Also in Gosse (II: 67-69)

Notes

l. 15 Pursevant] Pursuivant: apparently used here in the sense of a warrant rather than a warrant officer.

postscript] *Vigilia S^{t}. Tho*.: The vigil of St. Thomas, i.e., December 20.

Commentary

Much of this letter deals with Sir Henry Goodyer's financial state.

Sir H. Carey was Sir Henry Carey, who became the son-in-law of Lionel Cranfield in 1620.

The oblique danger that Donne refers to with respect to Goodyer's financial situation was that Goodyer was hiding some of Sir Tobie Mathew's property. Mathew, as a recusant, was subject to the expropriation of his property. Like other recusants, Mathew avoided expropriation by transferring the land to a friend or friends. "Mathew had a rent charge in England of ŀ80 a year, defeasible on payment of ŀ800 which was in Goodyer's hands (but not paid for) (Bald, Life 294, n. 2). By June 1614 Goodyer was ŀ120 behind in the rent he owed Mathew. (See A. H. Mathew and A. Calthrop 129-30.)

The "good Ladies pacquet" refers to a packet of letters sent to the Countess of Bedford. She is referred to later in the letter when Donne tells Goodyer not to let her know that he has been commanded by Somerset to compile a private printing of his poetry and dedicate it to him. The Countess of Bedford was one of the few people at court in the faction against Somerset. This faction had already introduced George Villiers to King James to undermine Somerset's position. This explains why Donne, along with every else at court, was keenly interested in Villiers' career and why Donne's letters to Goodyer at this time contain reports of Villiers' progress in the king's favor. That Donne believed that he could continue in the patronage of the Countess of Bedford, despite his relations with Somerset, is perhaps indicated by his scrupulous desire that he write no more poetry after he "interred" his muse with his obsequy on the Countess's brother, Lord Harrington. To that end he asks

Goodyer whether he can use the poem he had already written "A nostre Countesse chez vous" (the Countess of Huntington).

1615

148

[To Sir Edward Herbert]

S^{r} Because since I had the honer to see yo^{w}, or hear
from you, I haue receyvd such a change, as, if my unwor_
thynes did not avyle yt, were an addition, I ame bold
to present to yo^{w} the knowledge therof: because therby,
yor power, and iurisdiction, w^{ch} ys entirely over mee, ys
somewhat enlardged. for, as if I should put any other
stampe vpon a peece of yo^{r} gold, y^{e} gold were not the
lesse yo^{rs}, so (if there be not to much taken by mee, in
yt comparison) by havinge, by y^{e} orders of o^{r} churche,
receyvd a new caracter, I ame not departed from yo^{r}
title, and possession of mee. But, as I was euer, by
my deuotion, and yo^{r} acceptance, yo^{r} humble ser-
vant, so I ame become, by thys addition, capable of
y^{e} dignity, of beeinge
yo^{r} very humble
chapleyn
J: DONNE.

23 Jan: 16i4. w^{ch} was
y^{e} very day wherein I
tooke orders.

Source: Public Record Office, PRO 30/53/7/8, f. 15 (Beal No. 20)

Other transcriptions: Hayward (465-66)

Commentary

This letter is important because it precisely dates when Donne took orders (23 January 1615). The letter was written to Sir Edward Herbert, the eldest son of Magdalen Herbert and the ward of Sir George More and Sir Francis Wolley. Donne had probably known Sir Edward Herbert and his brother George Herbert since 1599, and was friendly with the entire family. Sir Edward Herbert received Donne's letter while travelling in Italy (Bald, *Life* 305). Donne adopted a new seal as a symbol of his new life, and sent some verses upon his new seal to George Herbert about the same time (Bald, *Life* 305).

In this letter Donne announces that he has taken orders using a conceit he thinks will appeal to Sir Edward Herbert. Donne tells Herbert that he remains as much as ever under his power and jurisdiction now that he is in the church just as a coin of Herbert's with a new stamp would remain his. Donne uses a similar conceit in his poem "To Mr. Tilman after he had taken orders":

> Art thou the same materials, as before,
> Onely the stampe is changed; but no more?
> And as new crowned kings alter the face,
> But not the monies substance; so hath grace
> Chang'd onely Gods old Image by Creation,
> To Christs new stampe, at this thy Coronation?
> (Gardner 32)

The change in the meaning of someone's life while the physical being remains the same fascinates Donne, as well as the religious significance of every object. In his sermons he makes explicit the biblical text that immediately comes to mind from the two conceits already cited: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesars; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 3:21).

> Beloved in Christ Jesus, the heart of your gracious God is set upon you; and we his servants have told you so, and brought you thus neare him, into his Court, into his house, into the Church, but yet we cannot get you to see his face, to come to that tendernesse of conscience as to remember and consider that all your most secret actions are done in his sight and presence; Caesars face, and Caesars inscription you can see: The face of the Prince in his coyne you can rise before the Sun to see, and sit up till mid-night to see; but if you do not see the face of God upon every piece of that mony too, all that mony is counterfeit; If Christ have not brought that fish to the hook, that brings the mony in the mouth (as he did to Peter) that mony is ill fished for. (Sermons 80.12.122, from Grierson II: 15)

In Elegy XI, "The Bracelet," Donne playfully takes a different view. Punning on the word "Angels," which were gold coins as well as supernatural entities, Donne complains to his lover that beating his angels into links of a gold chain to replace the chain of hers that he has lost destroys them.

> Thou say'st (alas) the gold doth still remaine,
> Though it be chang'd, and put into a chaine;
> So in the first falne angels, resteth still
> Wisdome and knowledge; but, 'tis turn'd to ill:
> As these should do good works; and should provide
> Necessities; but now must nurse thy pride.
> And they are still bad angels; Mine are none;
> For, forme gives being, and their forme is gone:
> (Grierson, I, 98)

149

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre, Gentleman of his Highnesses Bed-chamber.

SIR,

I Am come to that tendernesse of conscience, that I need a pardon for meaning to come to Newmarket in this weather. If I had come, I must have asked you many reall pardons, for the many importunities that I should have used towards you. But since I have divers errands thither, (except I belie my self in that phrase, since it is all one errand to promove mine own business, and to receive your commands) I shall give you but a short respit, since I shall follow this paper within two dayes. And (that I accuse my self, no farther then I am guilty) the principall reason of my breaking the appointment of waiting upon M. Rawlins, was, that I understood the King was from Newmarket; and for comming thither in the Kings absence, I never heard of excuse; except when Butler sends a desperate Patient in a Consumption thither for good aire, which is an ill errand now. Besides that I could not well come till now, (for there are very few dayes past, since I took Orders) there can be no losse in my absence except when I come, my Lord should have thereby the lesse latitude, to procure the Kings Letters to Cambridge. I beseech you therefore, take some occasion to refresh that

businesse to his Lordship, by presenting
my name, and purpose of comming very
shortly: and be content to receive me, who
have been ever your servant, to the additi-
on of

Your poor Chaplaine

27 January.

J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 111 (288-89)

Also in Gosse (II: 71-72)

Commentary

Newmarket and Royston were the locations of James's hunting lodges where he spent as much of his time as he could. The letter was written in 1615, because Donne mentions that he has been in orders for only a few days; Donne was ordained on 23 January 1615. The letter suggests that through Somerset's patronage (the "my Lord" of l. 25), James was to make Donne Doctor of Divinity at Cambridge. James visited Cambridge on 7 March 1615. According to Chamberlain, the university was reluctant to grant Donne a degree, and did so only after receiving a royal command (Bald, Life 12, n. 1). Donne was almost immediately appointed one of the king's Chaplains-in-Ordinary and probably accompanied James to Cambridge in that capacity (see Bald, Life 306-09 and notes for an account of the king's visit to Cambridge).

Butler, from the context, must have been a London physician. M. Rawlins may have been someone in Ker's employ.

150

[To Sir Henry Wotton]

S^r^.

I haue the honor of a letter from y^r^ Lp: and a testimony
that though better then any other you know my infirmity
yet you are not scandalized with my chang of habitt.
I haue S^r^. besydes many other internal advantages
this also by itt, that besydes the obligations of
frendship and services towards you w^ch^ binde mee
alwayes to commend y^r^ fortunes to God in my
prayers (having never had any other way of
expressing myself) I am come now to doe itt
by my office. And I may bee credible to do
my frend that service with much ernestnes
bycause as yet I haue no other charge. for I
do not so much as enquire of myne owne
hopes what the K. will do w^th^ me: Hee for-
bad me at first and I obey him still, and
forbeare so much as to remember him that
hee forbadd mee.

Source: Burley MS., f. 255

Transcription Notes

In the Burley MS. this letter was transcribed on f. 255, the Donne poems began on f. 279, and the letters (except for the postscript on f. 286) on f. 294. The other letters seem to date from Wotton's first embassy at Venice or earlier. Simpson (Prose Works 334) suggests that this letter is separated from the rest to fill up a blank page, a usual practice in commonplace books.

l. 14 K: King James

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 334) suggests that this letter was written by Donne soon after his ordination, which took place 23 January 1614/15, but does not specify that it was written to Wotton. Bald (Life 305) accepts this letter as having been written by Donne to Sir Henry Wotton. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") accepts this as one of the three letters definitely written by Donne that occur in the Burley MS. (the others are Nos. 11 and 14). The letter can be compared with Donne's letter To Sir Edward Herbert, 23 January 1614/15 announcing his taking orders that day. Donne may have been made a royal chaplain as early as March 1614/15 to accompany King James on his visit to Cambridge. Donne was reluctantly granted an honorary degree by Cambridge at the King's command. Since this letter responds to one of Wotton's in which Wotton indicates that he knows of Donne's taking orders, February is a more likely date than January for this letter. Wotton was in the Hague at this time and would have been able to receive and send letters considerably more quickly than when he was ambassador to Venice.

151

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Had destined all this Tuesday, for the Court, because it is both a Sermon day, and the first day of the Kings being here. Before I was to go forth, I had made up this inclosed pacquet for you, and then came this messenger with your pacquet, of which if you can remember the number, you cannot expect any account thereof from me, who have not half an hour left me before I go forth, and your messenger speakes of a necessity of returning homward before my returning home. If upon the delivery of them, or any other occasion, there intervene new subject of writing, I shall relieve my selfe upon Tuesday, if Tamworth carrier be in town. To the particulars of the Letter to my self, I will give this paper, and line. Of my Lady Bedford, I must say so much as must importune you to burn the Letter; for I would say nothing of her upon record, that should not testifie my thankfulnesse for all her graces. But upon this motion, which I made to her by letter, and by S^{r} Tho. Roes assistance, if any scruple should arise in her, she was somewhat more startling, then I looked for from her: she had more suspicion of my calling, a better memory of my past life, then I had thought her nobility could have admitted: of all which, though I humbly thank God, I can make good use, as one that needs as many remembrances in that kinde, as not only friends but enemies can present, yet I am afraid, they proceed in her rather from some ill impression taken from D. Burges, then that they grow in her self. But whosoever be the conduit, the water is the holy Ghosts, and in that acceptation I take it. For her other way of expressing her favour to me, I must say, it is not with that cheerfulnesse, as heretofore she hath delivered her self towards me. I am almost sorry, that an Elegy should have been able to move her to so much compassion heretofore, as to offer to pay my debts; and my greater wants now, and for so good a purpose, as to come disingaged into that profession, being plainly laid open to her, should work no farther but that she sent me 30l. which in good faith she excused with that, which is in both parts true, that her present debts were burdensome, and that I could not doubt of her inclination, upon all future emergent occasions, to assist me. I confesse to you, her former fashion towards me, had given a better confidence; and this diminution in her makes me see, that I must use more friends, then I thought I should have needed. I would you could burn this letter, before you read it, at least do when you have read it. For, I am afraid out of a Contemplation of mine own unworthinesse, and fortune, that the example of this Lady, should work upon the Lady where you are: for though goodnesse be originally in her, and she do good, for the deeds sake, yet, perchance, she may think it a little wisdome, to make such measure of me, as they who know no better, do. Of any new treaty of a match with Spain, I hear nothing. The warres in the Lowcountries, to judge by their present state, are very likely to go forward. No word of a Parliament, and I my self have heard words of the K. as directly against any such purpose, as any can sound. I never heard word, till in your letter, of any stirres in Scotland, for that of the French K. which you aske, it hath this good ground, That in the Assembly there a proposition hath been made, and well entertained, that the K. should be declared, to have full Jurisdiction in France; and no other person to have any. It hath much of the modell and frame of our Oath of Allegeance, but with some modification. It is true, it goes farther, then that State hath drove in any publique declarations, but not farther then their Schools have drove often and constantly: the easinesse that it hath found in passing thus farre without opposition, puts (perchance unnecessarily) in me a doubt, that they are sure to choak it, at the Royall assent, and therefore oppose it not, by the way, to sweeten the conveyance of their other purposes. Sir, if I stay longer I shall lose the Text, at Court, therefore I kisse your hand, and rest

Your very true servant
J. Donne.

We hear (but without second as yet) that Sir Rich. Philips brother in France, hath taken the habit of a Capuchin.

Source: Letters No. 78 (217-21)

Also in Gosse (II: 72-74)

Commentary

This letter can be dated approximately as March 1615 because it indicates that Donne had only recently received £30 from the Countess of Bedford with which to pay his debts after taking orders, and because the king had only recently returned to London from either Newmarket or his visit to Cambridge. The beginning and closing of this letter imply that Donne was to preach at Court that day, which would mean that he began his duties as Chaplain-in-Ordinary earlier than previously thought. Bald (Life 312) suggests that Donne's first sermon at Court was on 21 April 1616, which is the date of the earliest surviving sermon Donne preached at Whitehall. Bald also indicates that Donne's regular month of attendance at Court was April, which might mean that this letter was written in April 1615.

Donne's relations with the Countess of Bedford as a patroness are fully discussed by Patricia Thomson in "John Donne and the Countess of Bedford" (329-40). Dr. Burges was her physician who had been a preacher; he had strong Protestant leanings. The Elegy Donne refers to was his "Obsequy" on the death of the Countess of Bedford's brother, Lord Harrington. The "Lady where you [i.e., Goodyer] are" is the Countess of Huntington. Despite Donne's verse letters to other noble ladies written after his verse letters to the Countess of Bedford, which indicate that each Lady is the source and example of all virtue, this letter to Goodyer makes it clear that Donne regards the Countess of Bedford as the noble lady most likely to influence others.

References to external events also help date the letter: the troubles in Scotland of which Goodyer informs Donne, Sir Richard Philip's brother becoming a Capuchin monk in France; and the declaration of the King of France that he has full jurisdiction in France. Donne was naturally interested in this declaration, because in Pseudo-Martyr he had defended James's right to implement the Oath of Allegiance.

152

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre
Gentleman of his Highnesses Bedchamber.

SIR,

I Have often sinned towards you, with a presumption of being pardoned, but now I do it, without hope, and without daring to intreat you to pardon the fault. In which there are thus many degrees of importunity. That I must begge of you to christen a child, which is but a daughter, and in which you must be content to be associated with Ladies of our own alliance, but good women, and all this upon Thursday next in the afternoon. Sir, I have so many and so indeleble impressions of your favour to me, as they might serve to spread over all my poor race. But since I see that I stand like a tree, which once a year beares, though no fruit, yet this Mast of children, and so am sure, that one year or other I should afflict you with this request, I had rather be presently under the obligations and the thankfulnesse towards you, then meditate such a trouble to you against another year. I was desirous this paper might kisse your hands as soon as you came, that if any other diversions made this inconvenient to you, I might have an other exercise of your favor, by knowing so much from you, who in every act of yours make me more and more

Your humble and thankfull servant

17 Aprill.

J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 100 (271-72)

Also in Gosse (II: 75-76)

Commentary

This letter refers to the birth of Donne's tenth child and fifth daughter, Margaret, who was baptized on 20 April 1615 at St. Clement Danes. Donne and his wife had two more children after Margaret: Elizabeth, baptized on 14 June 1616, and a stillborn child on 16 August

1617 (Bald, Life 556). In a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne describes himself as a tree, but a barren sycamore (see Letter No. 40). Here at least Donne is a tree capable of producing mast (nuts) if not fruit. Donne's letter contains reminders of the seventeenth-century attitudes about the relative unimportance of both women and children.

153

Doctor Donne, to his Mother: comforting her after the death of her Daughter.

My most dear Mother,

WHen I consider so much of your life, as can fall within my memorie and observation, I find it to have been a Sea, under a continuall Tempest, where one wave hath ever overtaken another. Our most wise and blessed Saviour chuseth what way it pleaseth him, to conduct those which he loves, to his Haven, and eternall Rest. The way which he hath chosen for you, is strait, stormie, obscure, and full of sad apparitions of death, and wants, and sundry discomforts; and it hath pleased him, that one discomfort should still succeed, and touch another, that he might leave you no leasure, by anie pleasure or abundance, to stay or step out of that way, or almost to take breath in that way, by which he hath determined to bring you home, which is his glorious Kingdom. One of the most certain marks and assurances, that all these are his works, and to that good end, is your inward feeling and apprehension of them, and patience in them. As long as the Spirit of God distills and dews his cheerfulnesse upon your heart; as long as he instructs your understanding, to interpret his mercies and his judgments aright; so long your comfort must needs be as much greater than others, as your afflictions are greater than theirs. The happinesse which God afforded to your first young time, which was the love and care of my most dear and provident Father, whose soul, I hope, hath long since enjoyed the sight of our blessed Saviour, and had compassion of all our miseries in this world, God removed from you quickly. And hath since taken from you all the comfort, that that Marriage produced. All those children (for whose maintenance his industrie provided, and for whose education, you were so carefullie and so chargeablie diligent) he hath now taken from you. All that worth which he left, God hath suffered to be gone from us all. So that God hath seemed to repent, that he allowed any part of your life any earthly happinesse, that he might keep your Soul in continually exercise, and longing, and assurance, of comming immediately to him. I hope therefore, my most dear Mother, that your experience of the calamities of this life, your continually acquaintance with the visitations of the holy Ghost, which gives better inward comforts, than the world can outward discomforts. Your wisdom, to distinguish the value of this world from the next, and your religious fear of offending our mercifull God, by repining at any thing which he doth, will preserve you from any inordinate and dangerous sorrow, for this losse of my most beloved Sister. For my part, which am onely left now, to do the office of a child; though the poornesse of my fortune, and the greatnesse of my charge, hath not suffered me to expresse my duty towards you, as became me; yet, I protest to you before Almighty God, and his Angells and Saints in Heaven, that I do, and ever shall, esteem my self, to be as stronglie bound to look to you, and provide for your relief, as for my own poor wife and children. For, whatsoever I shall be able to do, I acknowledge to be a debt to you, from whom I had that education, which must make my fortune. This I speak not, as though I feared my father Rainsford's care of you, or his means to provide for you; for he hath been with me, and, as I perceive in him, a loving and industrious care to give you contentment; so, I see in his businesse, a happie and considerable forwardnesse. In the mean time,

> good Mother, take heed, that no sorrow
> nor dejection in your heart, interrupt
> or disappoint God's purpose in you;
> his purpose is, to remove out of your heart,
> all such love of this world's happinesse, as
> might put Him out of possession of it. He
> will have you entirelie. And, as God is
> comfort enough, so Hee is inheritance
> enough. Joyne with God, and make his
> visitations and afflictions, as he intended
> them, mercies and comforts. And, for
> God's sake, pardon those negligences, which
> I have heretofore used towards you; and
> assist me, with your blessing to me, and all
> mine; and with your prayers to our blessed Saviour, that thereby both my mind
> and fortune, may be apt to do all my duties, especially those that belong to you.
> God, whose omnipotent strength can
> change the nature of any thing, by his
> raising-Spirit of comfort, make your Povertie Riches, your Afflictions Pleasure,
> and all the Gall and Wormwood of your
> life, Hony and Manna to your taste, which
> he hath wrought, whensoever you are willing to have it so. Which because I cannot
> doubt in you, I will forbear more lines at
> this time, and most humblie deliver my
> self over to your devotions, and good opinion of me, which I desire no longer to live,
> than I may have.

Source: T.M.C. No. 183 (323)

Also in Gosse (II: 88-90)

Commentary

Donne's only surviving sister, Anne Lyly, died "about 1616," according to Gosse (II: 88). Bald (Life 316) suggests that she died in the spring of 1615. She was considerably older than Donne and had been married twice: in 1586 she married Mr. Avery Copley of an old Catholic family in Yorkshire, and after his death she married Mr. William Lily or Lillie, through whom Donne probably met Sir Robert Drury (see Bald, Life 238-40).

Donne's mother had married three times: she was born Elizabeth Heywood, daughter of John Heywood, the poet and dramatist (Bald, Life 22). She probably married John Donne (the poet's father) in March or April 1563; he died in January 1575/6. She was married again in July of that year to John Syminges, a prosperous doctor in physic of Oxford who had several times been President of the Royal College of Physicians (Bald, Life 35-38). He died in 1588. Mrs. Syminges was married again probably in 1590, but before 7 February 1591, to Richard Rainsford. Both Donne's mother and Richard Rainsford suffered severe financial losses for their recusancy.

154

To the Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre,
Gentleman of his Highnesses Bed chamber.

SIR,

I Have always your leave to use my liberty, but now I must use my bondage. Which is my necessity of obeying a precontract laid upon me. I go to morrow to Camberwell a mile beyond Southwark. But from this town goes with me my brother Sir Tho. Grimes and his Lady, and I with them. There we dine well enough I warrant you, with his father-in-law, Sir Tho. Hunt. If I keep my whole promise, I shall Preach both forenoon and afternoon. But I will obey your commandments for my return. If you cannot be there by 10, do not put your selfe upon the way: for, Sir, you have done me more honour, then I can be worthy of, in missing me so diligently. I can hope to hear M. Moulin again: or ruminate what I have heretofore heard. The onely misse that I shall have is of the honour of waiting upon you; which is somewhat recompensed, if thereby you take

occasion of not putting not your self to that
pain, to be more assured of the inabilities
of   *Your unworthy servant*
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 115 (295-96)

Also in Gosse (II: 81-)

Commentary

In this letter Donne declines an invitation from Sir Robert Ker to hear the famous French divine Pierre du Moulin preach at court on 6 June 1615 (Gosse II: 82; Bald, *Life* 311). Donne has a prior engagement to preach at the small village of Camberwell. Bald further notes that Donne often preached at Camberwell in later years. According to Gosse (II: 82), Sir Thomas Hunt of Foulsham in Norfolk was actually the stepfather of Sir Thomas Grymes, not his father-in-law.

155

[To Sir Henry Wotton?]

Ad bonitatem requiritum integritas boni; ad malum sufficit singularis defectus. To make my letters acceptable I should admitt no discontinuitie, least, as the best of ill Divines (the Roman schoolemen) thinke that vppon every sinn of ours God returnes to his anger for all the old store, you should vppon my new negligences remember my old I write therefore now, rather Ne detur vacuum then that I present any thing worthy. His Ma^{ties}:   . of y^{r} particulars I haue to [say] now, and myself am not worthy of a line, not in myne owne letters, my best honor is that I have a roome in y^{r} frendship, and my best merit that I giue y^{o} one in my prayers.

Source: Burley MS., f. 302

Transcription Notes

l. 1 "requiritum": should read "requiritur"

Notes

ll. 1-2 Ad bonitatem requiritur integritas boni; ad malum sufficit singularis defectus: Goodness requires perfect integrity of goodness, but one failing will lead to evil.

l. 6 Ne detur vacuum: Lest there should be a vacuum.

Commentary

Simpson (*Prose Works* 327) dates the letter after 1603 because of the reference to His Majesty (James I), who acceded to the throne in 1603. Perhaps the letter accompanied a cipher sent by Donne to Wotton for King James. If that is the case, the letter could be dated 1606 at the earliest and a much later date is perhaps more likely; the two known dates of Donne's use of a cipher are 1615 and 1623. In 1623 Donne received a cipher from Wotton, who was on his third embassy in Venice at the time. See Bald (*Life* 314-15) for a discussion of Donne's use of a cipher.

Simpson (*Prose Works* 327) cites Donne's letter to Sir Henry Goodyer (*Letters*, p. 97) as expressing a similar sentiment to the Latin quotation which begins this letter and suggests that the idea came from St. Thomas Aquinas:

> 'For vertue is even, and continuall, and the same, and can therefore break no where, nor admit ends, nor beginnings: it is not only not broken, but not tyed together. He is not vertuous, out of whose actions you can pick an excellent one. Vice and her fruits may be seen, because they are thick bodies, but not vertue, which is all light. . . .' Donne took the idea from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1-2^{ae}, qu. 19,

> art. 1, ad 1^{mum}: 'Ergo dicendum quod, sicut Dionysius dicit in 4 cap. de Div. Nom., bonum causatur ex integra causa, malum autem ex singularibus defectibus.' Ibid., quo. 20, art. 2: 'Est autem considerandum quod, sicut supra dictum est, ad hoc quod aliquid sit malum, sufficit singularis defectus; ad hoc autem quod est simpliciter bonum, non sufficit unum singulare bonum, sed requiritus integritas bonitatis.' The passage in Dionysius is in the old translation used by St. Thomas, cap. 4, lect. 22: 'Bonum ex una et tota est causa; malum autem ex multis et particularibus defectibus.'

Milgate, however, follows Laurence Stapleton ("The Theme of Virtue in Donne's Verse Epistles") and suggests in his introduction to the verse letters that Donne took the idea from Plato and that he used this idea extensively in discussions of virtue in his verse letters to great ladies.

> In the verse letters to great ladies Donne faced a different relationship, in which he was, in fact as in courtly convention, the inferior in status. The theme of virtue was ideally suited to dignified flattery; it could be related to the conventional attribution of beauty, grace, honour, and talent to the lady addressed; her possession of virtue warranted praise which could not (therefore) be supposed merely trivial and false; and it could be imaged and described in many properly poetic ways. Donne, however, extended the conventions, and rooted his compliments deeply in genuine moral conviction. He took from Plato an idea connected with one which we have already mentioned--the notion that virtue itself has integrity, is one and entire, and cannot be divided up into separate virtues; for a person 'is not vertuous, out of whose actions you can pick an excellent one'. To express this idea Donne uses not only Plato's own image--gold--but also ideas associated with gold and the philosophers' stone by the Paracelsians--the 'virtue', 'balsam', 'tincture', which is the indivisible essence and power of a substance. Furthermore, a person's virtue must be shown in his 'actions'. A 'milde innocence' is no doubt praiseworthy, but it is 'active good' (as Donne makes clear in the letter to the Countess of Huntingdon, 'Man to Gods image') that is the real mark of virtue. (Milgate, xxxvi)

Donne's use of virtue in these ways in the prose letters occurs until 1609, after which time he speaks of virtues as individual qualities and no longer makes virtue a subject of his meditations or discourses or homilies. In fact, his philosophical and theological speculations are gradually curtailed after 1614 and are replaced by a willingness to look to God for direction. As Donne says in a letter written in 1624 to Lady Kingsmill to console her on the death of her husband: "As Gods Scriptures are his will, so his actions are his will; both are Testaments, because they testifie his minde to us" (Letter No. 197).

1616

156

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

I Was loth to bee the onely man who should have no part in this great Festivall; I thought therefore to celebrate that well, by spending some part of it in your company. This made mee seek you againe this after-noone, though I were guilty to my selfe of having done so every day since your comming. I confesse such an importunity is worthy to be punished with such a missing; yet, because it is the likeliest reparation of my Fortunes to hope upon Reversions, I would be glad of that Title in you: that, after solemnities, and businesses, and pleasures be passed over, my time may come, and you may afford some of your last leisures to

Your affectionate and humble servant

4 Novemb.

J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 119 (302)

Also in Gosse (II: 87)

Notes

l. 12 Reversions: the right of succession to an office or place of emolument, after the death or retirement of the holder (O.E.D., 1623). Buying and selling reversions to leases and appointments was common at James's court and also applied to positions in the Church.

Commentary

The "great Festivall" which dates this letter 4 November 1616 was the investiture of Charles as the Prince of Wales.

157

To the Honourable Knight, Sir
Robert Karre.

SIR,

WHen I was almost at Court, I met the Princes Coach: I thinke I obeyed your purposes best therefore, in comming hither. I am sure I provided best for my selfe thereby; since my best degree of understanding is to bee governed by you. I beseech you give mee an assignation where I may wait upon you at your commoditie this Evening. Till the performance of which commandment from you, I rest here in the red Lion.

Your very thankefull and affectionate
Servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 118 (301)

Also in Gosse (II: 372)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 372) includes this letter in an appendix as one he cannot date. This letter may be linked to Letters No. 119, because, like that letter, it contains a reference to Prince Charles and to Donne's attempts to meet Ker. No. 118 can be dated 4 November 1616 because it contains a reference to the celebrations surrounding Charles's investiture as Prince of Wales. Donne mentions the Red Lion Inn in another letter to Ker. Donne aparently used the Inn regularly to wait for an audience with Ker. The Inn was owned by "Rice Freeman," a kinsman of Joan Freeman, the wife of Donne's friend John King, Bishop of London. See Letter No. 110.

1617

158

To the gallant Knight Sir Tho. Lucy [Sir Henry Goodyer].

SIR,

BEcause in your last Letter, I have an invitation to come to you, though I never thought my self so fallen from my interest, which, by your favour, I prescribe in, in you, and therefore when in the spring I hoped to have strength enough, to come into those parts, upon another occasion, I always resolved to put my self into your presence too, yet now I aske you more particularly how you dispose of your self; for though I have heard, that you purpose a journey to the Bath, and from thence hither, yet I can hope, that my service at Lincolns Inne being ended for next Terme, I may have intermission enough to waite upon you at Polesworth, before the season call you to Bath. I was no easie apprehender of the fear of your departing from us; neither am I easie in the hope of seeing you intirely over suddenly. God loves your soul, if he be loth to let it go inch-meale, and not by swallowings; and he loves it too, if he build it up again stone after stone; his will is not done except his way, and his leasure be observed. In my particular, I am sorry, if my ingenuity and candor in delivering my self in those points, of which you speak to me, have defaced those impressions which were in you before: if my freedome have occasioned your captivity, I am miserably sorry. I went unprofitably and improvidently, to the utmost end of Truth, because I would go as farre as I could to meet Peace; if my going so far in declaring my self, brought you where you could not stop. But I was as confident in your strength, as in mine own, so am I still, in him, who strengthens al our infirmities and will, I doubt not, bring you and me together, in all those particulars, so as we shall not part in this world, nor the next. Sir, your own soul cannot be more zealous of your peace, then I am: and God, who loves that zeale in me, will not suffer you to suspect it. I am surprised with a necessity of writing now, in a minute; for I sent to Bedford house to informe my self of means to write, and your daughter sent me word, of a present messenger, and therefore the rest of this, I shall make up in my prayers to our blessed Saviour, for all happinesses to you.

Drury house the 22 of Decemb. 1607. Your poor servant in Chr. Jesus
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 74 (208-10)

Also in Gosse (II: 117-18)

Commentary

As Gosse (II: 116) and Bennett ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 121, n. 3) indicate, the references to Polesworth (Goodyer's estate) show that this letter was written to Sir Henry Goodyer, not Sir Thomas Lucy. Donne was appointed Reader at Lincoln's Inn on 24 October 1616. The letter was dated 22 December 1607 in the 1651 Letters, but Gosse conjectures that the date was a misprint for 1617. Gosse is almost certainly right about the date. As he points out, Lucy Goodyer, Sir Henry's daughter, who was in the service of the Countess of Bedford at the time of the letter, was married while still very young to Sir Francis Nethersole in 1619 (early February 1619/20) and would have been a child in 1607. Donne's address at Drury House, contrary to what Gosse says, is correct. Donne lived at Drury House from about the end of September 1612 until late in 1621 (Bald, Donne & the Drurys 104, 119).

This letter to Goodyer, like a number of letters written 10 years earlier, deals with Goodyer's religious doubts. Donne apparently tried to allay them, as he had earlier, but this time only increased them. Sir Tobie Mathew was back in England from the middle of 1617 until the end of

1618 (Bald, Life 330-33). It seems likely that Mathew's influence re-awakened Goodyer's religious doubts, since Mathew was responsible for Goodyer's previous doubts.

Donne asks Goodyer what his specific plans are for the spring of 1618, since Donne plans to visit him then.

1619

159

Doctor Dunne, with a kind of labour'd Complement, to a Friend of his. [To Sir Tobie Mathew]

SIR,

THere is a dangerous Rule in Law, socius socii mei, non est socius meus. If it extend to Friendship, as well as to Familiaritie, I who can pretend no other title to your friendship, than that I am allowed some little interest in them, who have more in you, may well account my self to be within the danger of it. But, as in Divine. so in Morall things, where the beginning is from others, the assistance, and cooperation. is in our selves. I therefore, who could do nothing towards the begetting, would fain do somewhat towards the breeding and cherishing of such degrees of friendship, as formerly I had the honour to hold with you. If Letters be not able to do that office, they are yet able, at least to testifie, that he, who sends them, would be glad to do more, if he could. I have a great desire, not without some hope, to see you this Summer there; and I have more hope and more desire, to see you this next Winter here; and I have abundantly more of both, that, at least, we shall meet in Heaven. That we differ in our wayes, I hope we pardon one another. Men go to China, both by the Straights, and by the Cape. I never mis-interpreted your way; nor suffered it to be so, wheresoever I found it in discourse. For I was sure, you took not up your Religion upon trust, but payed ready money for it, and at a high Rate. And this taste of mine towards you, makes me hope for, and claime the same disposition in you towards me. I am sure, this messenger beares so many Letters to you, as if this of mine (which is written upon the first day of my comming to Town) should offer at any thing of the Times, it might perhaps shake your beliefe from somewhat, expressed in some of your other Letters, by my relating them diverselie. For it is but earlie daies with me here;

> and I see not things so distinctlie yet, as to
> lay them under such eyes as yours. This
> Letter doth therefore onely aske your safe
> conduct, for those others of mine, which are
> to follow, as the most constant testimonies
> of my love, &c.

Source: TMC No. 32 (67)

Notes

l. 2 socius socii mei, non est socius meus: an ally of my ally is not (necessarily) my ally.

Commentary

Mathew and Calthrop in The Life of Sir Tobie Mathew (157) suggested that the letter was addressed to Mathew in 1617 or 1618. J. P. Feil (142) dates this letter either in February or before 9 March 1618/19 because he regards it as one of a series which announced Doncaster's embassy. Doncaster, with Donne as his chaplain, passed through the Spanish Netherlands, stopping at Antwerp, Brussels and Mariemont en route to Germany in late May and early June 1619. Mathew met the party (Feil 142). Thus, the primary friend among those in whom Donne had an "interest" is Doncaster; Doncaster presumably also had an interest in Mathew; the hoping "to see you this Summer there" would refer to seeing Mathew in the Spanish Netherlands during Doncaster's embassy and Donne's greater hope and desire to "see you this next Winter here" would refer to Mathew's being allowed to return to England. Mathew began his second exile shortly before this. He had arrived in Antwerp on 5/15 January 1618/19 and he appeared in Brussels before 14/24th and then visited his Catholic friends in Brussels and Louvain (Feil 133-34).

I. A. Shapiro, however, dates this letter as pretty certainly written in November or December 1611 (Bald, *Life* 330, n. 3). No reason for this date is given, but Shapiro's dating probably assumes that the letter announces Donne's visit to the continent with Sir Robert Drury which began in November 1611. Donne met Mathew in Paris while with Sir Robert Drury and his party, sometime around the middle of March (Bald, *Donne and the Drurys* 96, 98). Donne's reference to Mathew in a letter to Goodyer of 9 April 1612 states merely: "When I came to this Town I found Mr. *Matthew*, diligent to finde a means to write to you; so that at this time, where there go so many I cannot doubt but he provides himself, therefore I did not ask his commandement, nor offer him the service of this Pacquet" (*Letters*, p. 133). Feil's dating is more likely to be correct because he dates the letter during a period when Mathew was anxious to cultivate Doncaster and Donne in the hope of returning to England, and his date suits the seasonal references of the letter better than Shapiro's.

160

To Sir H. Goodere [Goodyer] *at* Polesworth.

SIR,

IT is true that M. *Gherard* told you, I had that commandment from the King signified to me by my L. and am still under it, and we are within fourteen days of our time for going. I leave a scattered flock of wretched children, and I carry an infirme and valetudinary body, and I goe into the mouth of such adversaries, as I cannot blame for hating me, the Jesuits, and yet I go. Though this be no service to my Lord: yet I shall never come nearer doing him a service, nor do any thing liker a service then this. Yesterday we had news by Sir Nowell Carou, from Paris, that the D. of Savoy was elected King of Bohemia; which would cut off a great part of the occasion of our going: but it is not much credible in it self, nor at all beleeved here, because it is not signified from Savoy, nor Heidelberg. Since M. Gher. continues your Gazittier, I need tell you nothing of the Q. of Frances estate. For your commandment in memory of M. Martin, I should not have sate so many processes, if I could incline my thoughts that way. It is not lazinesse, it is not gravity, nor coldnesse towards his memory, or your service; for I have thought of it oftner, and longer, then I was wont to do in such things, and nothing is done. Your last pacquet, in which your daughter and I were joynt commissioners, was brought to me, because she was at Hampton, with the Queens body: but I sent her part to her, and my La. Uvedalls to her, who presents her service to you by me now, and says she will write next week, and so will I too, by Gods grace. You forget me absolutely and intirely, whensoever you forget me to that noble Countesse. God blesse you in all, Amen.

9 Martii. Your true servant in Jes. Chr.
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 56 (174-76)

Also in Gosse (II: 121-22)

Notes

l. 1 Gherard: George Garrard

l. 3 my L.[ord]: Lord James Hay, Viscount Doncaster

l. 7 valetudinary: weakly, infirm, delicate; not in robust health (O.E.D.)

l. 10 my Lord: God? Doncaster?

l. 19 M. Gher.: George Garrard

l. 20 Gazittier: Gazetteer: journalist

Commentary

The king's commandment to which Donne refers here was his appointment early in March 1618/19 as a chaplain to Viscount Doncaster's embassy to Germany (see Bald, Life 338-65). As this letter indicates, Donne was reluctant to go for a number of reasons. The embassy's departure date was postponed because of the king's illness and did not leave until 4 May (Bald, Life 345).

George Garrard was, of course, Donne and Goodyer's mutual friend. Richard Martin was another mutual friend of Donne and Goodyer; he died on 31 October 1618, only one month after having been made Recorder of the City of London. Donne tells Goodyer that he has tried but has been unable to write an elegy for Martin. Sir Nowell Carou was Noel Caron, Seigneur of Schonewal and the Dutch minister in England (Gosse II: 121). Carou's news had to do with the purpose of Doncaster's embassy. Bohemia was a Protestant German state with a Catholic ruler. In 1600, the Emperor Matthias had nominated his cousin, an inflexible Catholic, Frederick of Styria, as his successor. In May 1618 the Protestants rebelled. James I proposed to mediate the dispute to avoid war. The Duke of Savoy was a Catholic nobleman; if he had been elected King of Bohemia, it would have meant that a settlement of the question of religious toleration had been achieved and the embassy's main purpose would have been achieved.

Lucy Goodyer, Sir Henry's daughter, was attending Queen Anne's body at Hampton Court. Queen Anne had died on 2 March.

161

To Sir Thomas Lucy [Sir Henry Goodyer].

SIR,

THis first of April I received yours of 21 of Martii, which being two days after the ordinary Smithfield day, I could do no more, but seal this letter to be sent to you next Tuesday, because I foresee that I shall not then be in town. Whatsoever I should write now, of any passages of these days, would lose the verdure before the letter came to you, only give me leave to tell you that I need none of those excuses, which you have made to your self in my behalfe, for my not writing. For your son in law came to me, so near the time of his going away, as it had been impossible to have recovered him with a letter at so farre a distance, as he was lodged. And my L. Hunt. messenger received that answer, which, I hope, before this time, you know to be true, that I had sent the day before, by the infallible carrier of Smithfield. The Emperours death may somewhat shorten our way; for I discern now no reason of going to Vienna, but I beleeve it wil extend our busines; so that I promise my self no speedier return by that. If I write no letters into England out of these parts; I cannot be without your pardon, if I write not to you, but if I write to any and leave you out, lay all the faults which you have ever pardoned in me, to my charge again. I foresee some reasons, which may make me forbeare; but no slacknesse of mine own, shall. Sir, if I have no more the commodity of writing to you here in England, (as, we may be gon before next Tuesday) I tell you, in this departing from you, with the same truth and earnestnesse as I would be beleeved to speake in my last departing, and transmigration from the whole world, that I leave not behinde me a heart, better affected to you, nor more devoted to your service, then I carry with me. Almighty God blesse you, with such a reparation in your health, such an establishment in your estate, such a comfort in your children, such a peace in your conscience, and such a true cheerfulnesse in your heart, as may be strong seales to you, of his eternall gracious purpose upon you.

This morning I spend in surveying and
emptying my Cabinet of Letters; and at
the top of all I light upon this Letter lately
received, which I was loth to bury. I chose
to send it you, to mine own condemnati-
on; because a man so busie as he is, de-
scending to this expressing of himself in
verse, I am inexcusable towards you, for
disobeying a commandement of yours, of
that kinde; but I relie upon the generall,
that I am sure you are sure, that I never re-
fuse any thing for lazinesse, nor morosity,
and therefore make some other excuse for
me. You have been so long used to my hand
that I stand not to excuse the hasty ragged-
nesse of this Letter. The very ilnesse of the
writing, is a good argument that I forced
a time, in the fulnesse of businesse, to kisse
your hand, and to present my thanks as for
all your favours, and benefits, so principal-
ly for keeping me alive in the memory of
the noblest Countesse, whose commande-
ment, if it had been her La^{ps} pleasure to
have any thing said or done in her service,
at Heydelberg, I should have been glad to
have received. Sir, God blesse you, & *spiritu
principali confirmet te*; and

Your very true and affectionate servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

4. Apr. 1619.

Source: *Letters* No. 79 (222-25)

Also in Gosse (II: 126-27)

Notes

1. 2 Martii: March

1. 12 your son in law: Sir Francis Nethersole? Donne performed the marriage ceremony between Sir Francis Nethersole and Lucy Goodyer immediately after his return from the Continent (see Bald, *Life* 366-67).

1. 16 L. *Hunt*: L. Huntingdon, i.e., the Earl of Huntingdon (in whose service Goodyer was)

ll. 20-21 The Emperours death: the Emperor Mathias, head of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Bohemia

l. 70 the noblest Countess: the Countess of Bedford

ll. 74-75 *spiritu principali confirmet te*: confirm you in the holy spirit.

Commentary

The opening sentence of this letter confirms the correctness of the date in the postscript. This letter helps date several other undated letters written at this time (see Nos. 162, 163 and 164) because Donne explains to Goodyer that he spent the morning "in surveying and emptying my Cabinet of Letters" in preparation for his trip to Germany.

Donne informs Goodyer that this will probably be his last letter from England and tells him that he will not write during his trip. In fact, Donne did not leave until 4 May, although no further letters from Donne to Goodyer in 1619 are known, if *Letters* Nos. 7 and 8 are correctly dated April 4. Gosse (II: 120) suggests that Donne's position with the embassy was a sinecure given to Donne by the king to help restore his health. The king sent his own chaplain to perform the official duties, while Donne was to "assist" Viscount Doncaster (one of Donne's oldest and best friends at court) with his "conversation and discourse." Donne's announcement that he would not write is consistent with Gosse's view.

Amidst Donne's explanations about his correspondence, Donne states that he is enclosing a poem to his own "condemnation" because the poem was written by an extremely busy man while Donne has written nothing. Donne here must be referring to Goodyer's request for an elegy on Richard Martin which Donne refers to in *Letters* No. 56 (March 9, 1619) and which

Donne was unable to write. Donne's use of figurative language here (that he was "loth to bury" the poem) suggests an elegy and recalls his letter to Sir Edward Herbert which accompanied Biathanatos, in which he tells Sir Edward Herbert that the book should "not bury itself." This may be another indication that Donne's letter to Sir Edward Herbert was written at this time

Donne also tells Goodyer that he thinks that the Emperor Mathias's death will extend the embassy's business, even though it shortens their journey. Mathias's court was in Vienna, but his death made a settlement of the Bohemian conflict less likely. Donne also regrets that he has no message from the Countess of Bedford to the Princess Elizabeth (James's daughter and the wife of Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate). The Countess of Bedford was a childhood friend of Elizabeth, who had been raised by the Countess's parents, Lord and Lady Harrington, first at Rutland, then at Coombe Abbey in Warwickshire for five years. In 1607, when Elizabeth was twelve, Lord Harrington moved the princess to her own court at Kew. When Princess Elizabeth moved to Kew, the Countess of Bedford moved to an estate which she had leased at nearby Twickenham, where she lived until 1618. Aside from her personal friendship with the Princess Elizabeth, the Countess of Bedford and her husband strongly supported the Protestant aims of Frederick and Elizabeth, which indicated, as well, that the Earl and Countess of Bedford were against the proposed Spanish match. The Countess of Bedford's failure to use Donne as a messenger must have indicated to him in a fairly obvious way that he was no longer part of her inner circle.

162

To Sr. Robert Carre *now Earle of* Ankerum, *with my Book* Biathanatos *at my going into* Germany.

SIR,

I Had need do somewhat towards you above my promises; How weak are my performances, when even my promises are defective? I cannot promise, no not in mine own hopes, equally to your merit towards me. But besides the Poems, of which you took a promise, I send you another Book to which there belongs this History. It was written by me many years since; and because it is upon a misinterpretable subject, I have always gone so near suppressing it, as that it is onely not burnt: no hand hath passed upon it to copy it, nor many eyes to read it: onely to some particular friends in both Universities, then when I writ it, I did communicate it: And I remember, I had this answer, That certainly, there was a false thread in it, but not easily found: Keep it, I pray, with the same jealousie; let any that your discretion admits to the sight of it, know the date of it; and that it is a Book written by *Jack Donne*, and not by D. *Donne*: Reserve it for me, if I live, and if I die, I only forbid it the Presse, and the Fire: publish it not, but yet burn it not; and between those, do what you will with it. Love me still, thus farre, for your own sake, that when you withdraw your love from me, you will finde so many unworthinesses in me, as you grow ashamed of having had so long, and so much, such a thing as

Your poor servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 8 (21-22)

Also in Gosse (II: 124-25)

Commentary

Bennett's analysis of the 1651 *Letters* groups the collection into three main sections, each written to one of Donne's chief correspondents (Sir Henry Goodyer, Sir Robert Ker and George Garrard) and a miscellaneous section. Of the twenty-four letters written to Sir Robert Ker in the *Letters*, all except this one appear in the final section (Section V) of the collection. Bennett suggests that the younger Donne's source for this letter was thus either a copy kept by Donne or the presentation letter itself which had accompanied *Biathanatos* to Sir Robert Ker, and which Ker probably returned with *Biathanatos* itself (see Bennett, "Donne's *Letters to Severall Persons* 131). Bennett further suggests that Donne's son received the other letters from both Sir Robert Ker and George Garrard late in the compilation of the letters and hence did not intersperse them earlier in the book.

Donne sent this manuscript to Sir Robert Ker for safekeeping while he was in Germany with Viscount Doncaster. Donne learned of his appointment to accompany the embassy in early March 1619, because he wrote to Goodyer on 9 March confirming an earlier letter of George Garrard's to Goodyer which informed Goodyer of Donne's appointment. Donne tells Goodyer he expects to leave within fourteen days. The king fell ill almost immediately after Queen Anne's death on 2 March and Donne must have been anticipating the length of the king's illness in giving Goodyer his projected time of departure. Donne and the embassy did not leave until May 4. In another letter to Goodyer (*Letters* No. 79, p. 224) dated 4 April 1619, Donne states that he spent the morning "surveying and emptying my Cabinet of Letters." It seems likely that this letter to Ker was written on or around 4 April 1619 as part of Donne's preparations for travel. Donne probably also sent a copy of *Biathanatos* to Sir Edward Herbert at this time (see Letter No. 163), which immediately follows this letter.

163

To the Noblest knight
S^{r} Edward Herbert.

S^{r}
I make account that thys Booke hath inough per=
form'd [y^{t}] w^{ch} yt undertooke, both by Argument and
Example. Itt shall therfore the lesse neede to bee
yttselfe another Example of y^{e} Doctrine. Itt shall
not therfore kyll yttselfe; that ys, not bury itselfe.
For if ytt should do so, those reasons by w^{ch} that
Act should bee defended or excusd, were also lost
w^{t} ytt. Since ytt ys content to liue, ytt cannot
chuse a wholsomer ayre then yo^{r} Library, where
Aut[h]ors of all complexions are preserud. If any
of them grudge thys Booke a roome, and sus=
spect ytt of new, or dangerous Doctrine, yo^{w}, who
know us all, can best Moderate. To those Reasons,
w^{ch} I know yo^{r} Loue to mee wyll make in my fauor,
and dischardge, yo^{w} may add thys, That though
thys Doctrine hath not beene tought nor defen=
ded by writers, yet they, most of any sorte of Men
in the world, haue practisd ytt. --- --- .
yo^{r} uery true and earnest
frinde, and Seruant
and Louer
J: DONNE.

Source: Bodleian MS e Mus 131 (Beal No. 21). Evelyn Simpson reproduces the holograph on the frontispiece of *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*.

Other transcriptions: E. W. Sullivan II (124-25)

Simpson (*Prose Works* 161) (Simpson also reprints the text as it appears in the *Letters*, pp. 161-62)

Gosse (II: 125)

Letters 1651 (Letter No. 7: "To the Noblest knight S^{r}. Edward Herbert L. of Cherbury; sent to him with his Book Biathanatos") (20)

The Transcription

The text of this letter is exceptionally important because it is one of only two holographs that also appear printed in the 1651 Letters. (The other is No. 197.) This text, therefore, is very important in assessing the accuracy of the 1651 Letters. It is for this reason that Ernest W. Sullivan II uses this letter as an example of the problem of text in familiar letters. He points out that, according to his transcription, between the holograph and the letter printed in the Letters there are changes in spelling, punctuation and capitalization that affect eighty of the 172 words in the letter. Sullivan notes that there are twelve contractions expanded (a normal seventeenth-century printing practice), forty-seven spelling changes, seventeen changes in capitalization (fifteen capitals dropped), and nine changes in punctuation out of a total of twenty-eight. It is the punctuation, however, that chiefly concerns him.

> Donne's sentence and clause length and the frequency of his punctuation reflect his attitude towards his subject matter: shorter sentences and heavier punctuation typify his witty and satirical prose; longer, less heavily punctuated sentences and clauses, his serious works. The longer sentences and lighter punctuation of the printed letter, then, may represent Donne's attitude towards the content or addressee of the letter, matters of serious concern to critics of familiar letters. (119)

Sullivan also points out one substantive error, "presented" for "preserud" (l. 13), which would be irrecoverable without the holograph because "presented" also makes sense. My transcription differs from

Sullivan's in that I indicate y^{t} (l. 5) is an insert written above the line; on the last line of the body of the letter (l. 21) ytt. is followed by two dashes and a period; and I transcribe Donne's signature J: DONNE rather than I. DONNE. See the chapter on the literary significance of the letters for a discussion of Donne's punctuation.

Collation

Holograph, Bodleian MS e Mus 131

Letters, 1651-54, No. 7, p. 20

To the Noblest knight] *To the Noblest knight S^{r}*. Edward Herbert *L. of*
S^{r} Edward Herbert.] Cherbury; *sent to him with his*
Book Biathanatos

S^{r}] SIR,

l. 1 make] Make account] accompt thys] this
Booke] book inough] enough

l. 2 perform'd] performed y^{t}] that w^{ch}] which
y^{t}] it undertooke] undertook Argument] argument
Neede] need bee] be

l. 4 yttselfe] it self Example] example y^{e}] the Itt] It

l. 5 therfore] therefore kyll] kill ytt selfe] it self ys] is
itselfe.] it self;

l. 6 For] for ytt] it reasons] reasons, w^{ch}] which

l. 7 Act] act bee] be excusd] excused

l. 8 w^{t}] with ytt] it ytt] it ys] is liue] live ytt] it
wholesomer ayre] wholsomeraire yo^{r}] your

l. 9 Aut[h]ors] Authors preserud] presented

l. 10 thys] this Booke] book roome] room

l. 11 ytt] it Doctrine] doctrine yo^{w},] you

l. 12 Moderate] moderate Reasons,] reasons

l. 13 w^{ch}] which yo^{r}] your Loue] love mee] me wyll] will
fauor,] favour

l. 14 dischardge] discharge yo^{w}] you add] adde thys] this That] that

l. 15 thys] this Doctrine] doctrine beene] been tought] taught

l. 16 Men] men

l. 17 haue] have practisd] practised ytt. --- --- .] it.

yo^{r} uery true and earnest	Your very true and earnest friend
frinde, and Seruant	and servant and lover
and Louer	J. Donne.
J: DONNE.	

Commentary

The letter is a presentation letter accompanying a copy of Donne's book *Biathanatos* which is a defence of suicide. The subject of the book is responsible for Donne's figurative language in describing his purpose in sending the book to Sir Edward Herbert. The letter itself is believed to be dated April 1619 (see *Letters* No. 8, *Commentary*) but *Biathanatos* was written much earlier. Simpson dates it after 1606 because of a reference to Kepler's *De Stella Nova*, which was published in Prague in that year. Gosse dates it in 1608 because it appears to reflect Donne's melancholy at that time. Bald (*Life* 201, n. 2) dates it 1607 or 1608, quoting Sprott, who favors 1608 because Donne does not make use of two influential books that contained discussions of suicide: Molina's fourth tome published in 1609 or Azorius's third tome published in 1612. Sullivan also accepts 1608 as the most likely date. See also *Letters* No. 12, pp. 31-36, To Sir H. G., which contains the first known reference to *Biathanatos*. Donne did not want either to publish or to destroy his book, which some biographers believe was written as a way for Donne to deal with his own suicidal tendencies. These were most pronounced in

1608/9 when Donne appears to have been most depressed about remaining without employment, a situation which had persisted since his marriage in 1601 (Bald, *Life* 157).

164

To the right honourable the Countess of Montgomery.

MADAM,

OF my ability to doe your Ladiship service, any thing may be an embleme good enough; for as a word vanisheth, so doth any power in me to serve you; things that are written are fitter testimonies, because they remain and are permanent: in writing this Sermon which your Ladiship was pleased to hear before, I confesse I satisfie an ambition of mine own, but it is the ambition of obeying your commandment, not onely an ambition of leaving my name in the memory, or in the Cabinet: and yet, since I am going out of the Kingdom, and perchance out of the world, (when God shall have given my soul a place in heaven) it shall the lesse diminish your Ladiship, if my poor name be found about you. I know what dead carkasses things written are, in respect of things spoken. But in things of this kinde, that soul that inanimates them, receives debts from them: The Spirit of God that dictates them in the speaker or writer, and is present in his tongue or hand, meets himself again (as we meet our selves in a glass) in the eies and hearts of the hearers and readers: and that Spirit, which is ever the same to an equall devotion, makes a writing and a speaking equall means to edification. In one circumstance, my preaching and my writing this Sermon is too equall: that that your Ladiship heard in a hoarse voyce then, you read in a course hand now: but in thankfulnesse I shall lift up my hands as clean as my infirmities can keep them, and a voyce as clear as his spirit shall

be pleased to tune in my prayers in all places
of the world, which shall either sustain or
bury

Your Ladiships humble servant
in Christ Iesus
J. D.

Source: Letters No. 10 (24-26)

Also in Gosse (II: 123-24). Gosse states that his text is amended from a copy of the letter.

In the O'Flahertie MS., Harvard College Library

(Keynes [137, n. 2] points out that Gosse [II: 122] wrongly considered the copy in the O'Flahertie MS. to be the original.)

I cannot find the letter in O'F. Simpson (Prose Works) states that this letter appears in Dobell MS. Harvard f MS Eng 966.4 (formerly Harvard College, Norton 4506).

Commentary

This letter accompanied a sermon preached by Donne at The Cockpit, a group of apartments occupied by the Earl and Countess of Montgomery next to Whitehall (Bald, Life 341, n. 2). The sermon was given on 21 February 1618/19 and the text is from St. Matthew 21:44 (No. 8 in Potter and Simpson, The Sermons of John Donne II: 23-36). While the letter is undated, Donne's reference to "going out of the kingdom" clearly places this letter among those written in early April 1619 as part of Donne's putting his affairs in order before leaving on the embassy with Doncaster. Donne's letters written at this time deal with death and burial, either figuratively or literally. Here he discusses both: he suggests to the Countess of Montgomery that his written sermon is a carcass of the sermon she heard spoken, and suggests that when he goes out of the kingdom he may be going out of the world.

The Earl of Montgomery was Philip Herbert, the cousin of Donne's friends, the brothers George Herbert and Sir Edward Herbert, Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Both George and Sir Edward were sons of Lady Magdalen Herbert, Donne's friend and patroness. The Countess of Montgomery was Philip Herbert's first wife, Lady Susan Vere. Philip Herbert's second wife, Lady Ann Clifford, also thought highly of Donne.

165

A Letter of much kindnesse from Doctor Donne, to Sir Toby Mathew, from Colleyn.

SIR,

AT Ratisbone I had your Letter from Brussel's; and, in it, you. For, my former knowledge of your ingenuitie, and mine own conscience of having demerited in nothing toward you, are assurances to me, that your professions are in earnest. I dare put my selfe upon the testimony of very many very good Companies in England, where your Person, and your Historie, have been the discourse, that I have never forsaken your honour and reputation. And you may be pleased to make this some argument of my disposition toward you, that when I have been told, that you have not been so carefull of me abroad, I have not been easie in beleeving it; and when at sometimes, the authoritie of the reporter, hath brought me to a half-belief of it, I have found other excuses in your behalfe, than a meer dis-affection to me: and now I am safelie returned to my first station again, not to beleeve it. If it could be possible that any occasion of doing you a reall service, might be presented me, you should see, that that Tree which was rooted in love, and alwaies bore leaves, readie to sha-

> dow and defend from others malice, would
> bear fruit also. You know, we say in the
> Schools, that Grace destroys not Nature: we
> may say too, that forms of Religion destroy
> not moralitie, nor civill offices. That
> which I add, I am farre from applying to
> you, but it is true, That we are fallen into so
> slack and negligent times, that I have been
> sometimes glad to hear, that some of my
> friends have differed from me in Religion.
> It is some degree of an union to be united
> in a serious meditation of God, and to make
> any Religion the rule of our actions. Our
> sweet and blessed Saviour bring us by his
> way, to his end! And be you pleased to be
> assured, that no man desires to renew, or
> continue, or encrease a friendship with
> you more than [see textual notes].

Source: T.M.C. No. 189 (336)

Also in Gosse (II: 136-37), Feil (144-45)

Textual Notes

This letter ends abruptly, with no closing.

Commentary

J. P. Feil (144-45) dates this letter 16/26 August 1619 and shows that it is a reply by Donne to a letter by Sir Toby Mathew to Viscount Doncaster dated 17/27 July 1619 (BM Egerton 2592/237-38). In the letter to Doncaster, Mathew defends himself against a report made by William Trumbull, the English Agent in Brussels, to Doncaster. Trumbull reported that the Earl of Argyle had become Prefect of the Sodality (a religious guild or brotherhood) of English Jesuits at Louvain and that Mathew and Sir William Stanley had also sought the office. For Trumbull, this was evidence of Mathew's political defection. Feil states, however, that

> Matthew welcomed the opportunity to defend himself and did so with gusto. . . . This sodality, he asserted, like others to which he belonged, had no political implications but was directed entirely to religious ends, particularly to increasing devotion to the Virgin; consequently, it was no more dangerous than the Mass. To prove this he enclosed the rules of the group, and offered, if Doncaster lacked the time to study them, to be judged by the 'ingenuity and prudence' of Doctor Donne. (Feil 143)

Mathew thanked Donne in a letter delivered to Donne by George Gage (T.M.C. 273).

Although Gosse (II: 136-37) dates this letter 13(?) September 1619, Feil shows that it must have been written earlier because

> by that date Doncaster and Donne had joined Matthew at Spa (Camden Society Publications, XCVIII [1868], 3, 4, Doncaster to Naunton, 22 August/1 September 1619, Trumbull to Carleton, 13/23 September 1619; BM Egerton 2593/98, 99, Trumbull to Doncaster, 18/28 March 1619/20). Donne must have received Mathew's letter about 14/24 July (CSP, n.s., XC, 174-79), Doncaster to Naunton, 24 July/3 August 1619) and replied on 16/26 August (ibid., XC, 205, 207, same to same, 16/26 and 18/28 August 1619). (Feil 145n.)

166

[To Sir Dudley Carleton]

I present to yo^{r} Lp: here a hand, w^{ch}, I thinke, you never saw, and a name w^{ch} carryes no such merit, w^{t} yt, as that it should be well knowen to yo^{w}; but yet yt ys the hand, and the name of a person very much deuoted to yo^{r} Lps service. If that be not inough to excuse my present importunity, thys ys abundantly inough that herin I execute a commandement of my L: of Doncaster: who, hauinge formerly written to Calandrini to Nurimberg, to change the place of y^{e} receyt of hys moneys, and to send those Bylls w^{ch} are to serve him at Amsterdam to yo^{r} Lp: (w^{ch} he doubteth not, before thys tyme, ys performd by Calandrini) hath commanded me now, to accompany thys servant of hys, M^{r} Whitlow, w^{t} thys addresse to yo^{r} Lp: that he may recyue such Bylls as Calandrini hath consigned to yo^{r} hands, for hys use. He commanded me also, to let yo^{r} Lp: know, that the Count Palatin, after hys hauinge been elected k: of Bohemia, dispatchd y^{e} Baron Donah into England: from whom, in hys passinge by Coleyne, hys Lp: receyud a letter, and w^{t} yt another from y^{e} C: pala[t]in himselfe: from the resultance of w^{ch}, and of other auises, my L: doth not thinke that he abuses himselfe, in beleeuinge that y^{e} C. palatin hath

a disposition to accept of y^{t} Crown. Before Baron Donah hys passinge, my L: (who understood otherwise of y^{e} Election) had sent hys secretary, M^{r} Nethersoll into England, to present more effectually then letters could do and more clearly then as yet was apprehended, the state of y^{e} affayres here, and is now come to Mastrich, where he purposes to attend hys [secretaries]
[returne. And
howsoever hys M^{tie} shall be pleased to dispose of hym farther in thys negotiation, my L: hath all ready conceyud much comfort in thys, that he hath all ready instruction, when he shall returne, to returne by Holland, where he may declare hys affection to them, and hys desire to empty himselfe freely in all things conducing to hys M^{ties} seruice, in yo^{r} Lps bosome. It ys so generall a busines that euen so low and poor a man as I, haue a part in yt and an office to do for yt; w^{ch} ys, to promoue yt w^{t} y^{e} same prayers as I present for myne own Soule, to y^{e} ears of almighty god. In w^{ch} I shall never be defectiue nor in any thinge, wherin I might declare in particular, my desire to be esteemed by yo^{r} Lp:

yor Lps
most humble servant in Chr: Jes:
J: DONNE

Mastrich: 31 Aug:
1619: styl: vet:

Source: Public Record Office SP.84/91/219 (Beal No. 22)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 133-34)

Transcription Notes

The name and address do not appear on the holograph.

Commentary

Donne was sent as Lord Doncaster's chaplain during Doncaster's embassy to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the dispute between Ferdinand, Emperor of Bohemia, and his Protestant subjects whose rights he had curtailed (Bald, Life 338). Lord Doncaster's embassy was doomed from the start, because England's role as mediator, although suggested by James and encouraged by the Spanish, was used by the latter only as a means of keeping England from espousing the Protestant cause in Germany (Bald, Life 339). The embassy left England on 4 May 1619 and returned unsuccessful 1 January 1620. From the first, the journey did not proceed as planned. Donne's letter is to Sir Dudley Carleton, the English Ambassador at the Hague. Lord Doncaster was originally to visit Holland on his way to Germany. For some reason Doncaster did not go to Holland then, but, as Donne informed Carleton, planned to stop there on his return to England. The purpose of Donne's letter was to have Doncaster's funds forwarded to him. Lord Doncaster's secretary, Sir Francis Nethersole, was knighted during the embassy. Donne performed the marriage ceremony between Sir Francis Nethersole and Lucy Goodyer, the daughter of Donne's closest friend, Sir Henry Goodyer, almost immediately (on 12 February) upon the return of the embassy. For a full account of Donne's role with Doncaster's embassy, see Bald (Life 338-65).

1620

167

To Sir H. Goodere [Goodyer].

SIR,
AGreeably to my fortune, and thoughts,
I was crawld this back way from *Keyston*;
through my broken casement at *Bedford*,
I saw, for my best dish at dinner, your
Coach: I studied your gests, but when I
knew where you were, I went out of this
Town, in a doubt whether I should turn in
to *Wrest*; and you know the wisdome of
the Parliament is, to resolve ever in the Negative:
Therefore it is likeliest I shall not
come in there; yet, let me give you in passing,
thus much account of my self: I
thought to kisse my L. *Spencers* hands, at one
house, and have passed three. If you know
nothing to the contrary, risen since I came
from *London*, I am likely to have a room in
my L. of *Dov*. train, into the Countrie; if I
have, I do not ask, but use the leave of waiting
upon you at home: There and ever
elswhere, our blessed Saviour blesse you,
and all yours, in which number, I pray, account
ever

Your very thankfull servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 68 (202-03)

Also in Gosse (II: 138-39)

Textual Notes

l. 17 L. of *Dov*.] compositor error for my L. of *Don*. (Viscount Doncaster)

Commentary

Keyston was Donne's first benefice and was bestowed on him by King James on 16 January 1615/16 (see Letter No. 178 for a fuller account and see also Bald, Life 317 and 317, n. 2). Keyston was in Huntington. Donne apparently saw Goodyer's carriage at Bedford; Goodyer must have been visiting the Earl of Kent, whose residence was Wrest; hence Donne's pun. Lord Spencer is also referred to in Letter No. 104. This letter refers to Donne's possibly visiting Goodyer at Polesworth. Donne had planned to visit Goodyer in the spring of 1619, but was prevented from doing so by his appointment to Doncaster's embassy to Germany, which occupied Donne from early March 1619/20 when he received the appointment, until January 1620 when the embassy returned to England. This letter, then, was probably written in 1620, as Donne renewed his plan to visit Goodyer. Donne's statement that he does not ask permission to visit Goodyer may imply that he has already received an earlier invitation. That Donne would travel with Doncaster's train into the country might also be an indication that this letter was written after the embassy had returned; and that the close relationship established on the embassy was sustained.

1621

168

[To George Villiers, Marquess of Buckingham]

May it please yor Lp:
Euer since I had yo^{r} Lps letter, I haue esteemed myselfe in possession of Salisbury, and more then Salisbury, of a place in yo^{r} Seruice; for I tooke Salisbury, as a Seale of y^{t}. I hear y^{t} my L: keeper finds reason to continue in westminster; and I know, that neyther yo^{r} Lp, nor he knowes, how narrow, and penurious a fortune I wrastle wth, in thys world. But I ame so far from dependinge upon y^{e} assistance of any, but yo^{r} Lp, as that I do not assist myselfe so far, as wth a wishe, that my L: keeper would have left a hole, for so poore a worme, as I ame, to have crept in at. All y^{t} I meane, in vsinge thys boldnes, of puttinge myselfe into yo^{r} Lps presence, by thys ragge of paper, ys, to tell yo^{r} Lp. that I ly in a Corner, as a clodd of Clay, attendinge what kinde of vessel yt shall please yo^{w} to make, of

yor Lps
Humblest and thankfullest
and deuotedst
Seruant
J: DONNE

8^{o} Aug: 1621

Source: Bodleian, MS Add. D. III, ff. 133-34 (Beal No. 23)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 140)

Commentary

After Donne's return from Germany with Doncaster, his influence at court was strengthened, not only by Doncaster's friendship, but also by the patronage of Buckingham. As various higher offices in the church came vacant, Donne's name was among those rumored to be candidates. This letter suggests that Buckingham had promised him "Salisbury" (presumably the deanery). Usually Buckingham's support ensured an appointment, but despite two separate opportunities Donne did not get Salisbury. After the death of Dr. Fotherbie, the Bishop of Salisbury, on 20 March 1619/20, he was succeeded eight days later by the Dean of Westminster. The Dean of Salisbury, Dr. Williams, became Dean of Westminster, but Dr. Bowles (or Bolles), not Donne, became the new Dean of Salisbury. A year later the death of John King, Bishop of London, opened that position. Among other rumors surrounding the vacancy, one had Dr. Montaigne (or Mountain), Bishop of Lincoln, becoming Bishop of London; Dr. Williams becoming Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Bowles becoming Dean of Westminster, and Donne succeeding him as Dean of Salisbury. In fact, Montaigne became Bishop of London and Williams became Bishop of Lincoln, but Williams was also made Keeper of the Great Seal and so was allowed to keep the deanery at Westminster as well as the see of Lincoln to provide him with a suitable income. Hence Bowles stayed at Salisbury, and Donne remained without high office. It is to this second failure to secure Salisbury which took place in 1621 that Donne refers in this letter (Bald, Life 370-71).

169

To the Honourable Knight Sir H. Goodere.

SIR,

I Have but one excuse for not sending you the Sermon that you do me the honour to command, and I foresee, that before I take my hand from this paper, I shall lose the benefit of that excuse; it is, that for more than twenty days, I have been travelled with a pain, in my right wrist, so like the Gout, as makes me unable to write. The writing of this Letter will implore a commentary for that, that I cannot write legibly; for that I cannot write much, this Letter will testifie against me. Sir, I beseech you, at first, tell your company, that I decline not the service out of sullennesse nor lazinesse, nor that any fortune damps me so much, as that I am not sensible of the honour of their commanding it, but a meer inexperience whether I be able to write eight hours or no; but I will try next week, and either do it, for their service, or sink in their service. This is Thursday: and upon Tuesday my Lady *Bedford* came to this town: this afternoon I presented my service to her, by M^{ris} *Withrington*: and so asked leave to have waited upon them at supper: but my messenger found them ready to go into their Coach: so that a third Letter which I received from M^{ris} *Dadley*, referring me to *M^{ris} Withringtons* relation of all that State, I lose it till their return to this town. To clear you in that wherein I see by your Letter that I had not well expressed my self in mine, Sir *Ed. Herbert* write to Sir *Ed. Sackvil*, not to presse the King to fix any certain time of sending him, till he was come over, and had spoken with the King: Sir *Ed. Sackvil* collects upon that, that Sir *Ed. H*. meanes to go again; I think it is only, that he would have his honour so saved, as not to seem to be recalled, by having a successor, before he had emptied the place. We hear nothing from my Lord of *Doncaster*; nor have we any way to send to him. I have not seen my Lady *Doncaster*, for she crost to *Penhurst*, and from thence to *Petworth*, my Lady *Isabella* came to this Town; where, before her comming, a Letter attended her from my Lady of *Tichfield*: and thither she went, with their servants, who staid her comming. Hither came lately Letters with goodspeed from *Vienna*, in which there is no mention of any such defeat, as in rumour C. *Mansfeld* hath been said to have given to the D. of *Bavyer*: but their forces were then within such distance, as may have procured something before this time. Those which watched advantages in the Court of the Emperour, have made that use of C. *Mansfelds* proceedings, as that my Lord *Digby* complains, that thereby, the forwardnesse in which his negotiation was, is somewhat retarded. He proceeds from thence into *Spain*. The D. of *Bavyer* hath presented the Emperour an account of 1200^{ml}. sterling in that warre, to be reimbursed: and finding the Palatinate to be in treaty, hath required a great part of Austria for his security, and they say, it is so transacted; which is a good signe of a possibility in the restitution of the Palatinate. For any thing I discern, their fears are much greater from Hungary, then from Bohemia; and the losse of Canon, in a great proportion, and other things, at the death of Bucquoy, was much greater, then they suffered to be published. We here Spinola is passed over at Rhenebery; if it be so, they are no longer distracted, whether he would bend upon Juliers, or the Palatinate. I know not what you hear from your noble son in law, who sees those things clearly in himself, and in a near distance; but I hear here, that the King hath much lost the affection of the English in those parts. Whether it proceed from any sowrenesse in him, or that they be otherwise taken off, from applying themselves to him, I know not. My Lord of S. Albons hath found so much favour as that a pension of 2000 l. will be given him; he desires that he might have it for years, that so he might transferre it upon his creditors; or that in place of it he might have 8000 l. for he hath found a disposition in his creditors (to whom I hear he hath paid 3000 l. since by retyring) to accept 8000 l. for all his debts, which are three times as much. I have been some times with my L. of Canterbury, since by accident, to give you his own words. I see him retain his former cheerfulnesse here and at Croydon, but I do not hear from Court, that he hath any ground for such a confidence, but that his case may need favour, and not have it. That place, and Bedington, and Chelsey, and Highgate, where that very good man my Lord Hobard is, and Hackney, with the M. of the Rolls, and my familiar Peckham, are my circumferrence. No place so eccentrique to me, as that I lye just at London; and with those fragmentary recreations I must make shift to recompense the missing of that contentment which your favour opens to me, and my desire provokes me to, the kissing of your hands at Polesworth. My daughter Constance is at this time with me; for the emptinesse of the town, hath made me, who otherwise live upon the almes of others, a houskeeper, for a moneth; and so she is my servant below stairs, and my

> companion above: she was at the table with me, when your Letter was brought, and I pay her a piece of her petition in doing her this office, to present her service to my Lady _Nethersoles_, and her very good sister. But that she is gone to bed two hours before I writ this, she should have signed, with such a hand as your daughter _Mary_ did to me, that which I testifie for her, that she is as affectionate a servant to them all, as their goodnesse hath created any where. Sir, I shall recompense my tediousnesse, in closing mine eyes with a prayer for yours, as for mine own happinesse, for I am almost in bed; if it were my last bed, and I upon my last businesse there, I should not omit to joyn you with
>
> _Your very humble and very thankfull_
> Aug. 30. 1611. _servant in Christ Jesus_
> J. Donne.

Source: _Letters_ No. 51 (154-59)

Also in Gosse (II: 141-44)

Textual Notes

l. 49 my Lady of Tichfield: my Lady of Lichfield

l. 65 1200^{ml}] Hester's facsimile reproduction reads 1200^{m}.

l. 77 We here] We hear

l. 99 since by accident] should read "since his accident," as Bald (_Life_ 373) amends the passage.

Commentary

Although the letter is dated 30 August 1611 in the 1651 _Letters_, the contents clearly date it 30 August 1621. Donne makes reference to the recalling of Sir Edward Herbert as ambassador to France. He was recalled in August 1621 and Viscount Doncaster replaced him. Donne also reports events from the war in Germany that help establish the date. Optimistic reports indicated that C. Mansfeld (Count Ernest of Mansfeld), a mercenary general employed by Frederick, had defeated the Duke of Bavaria (D. of Bavyer) when no battle had yet taken place. Lord Digby (Sir John Digby, later Earl of Bristol), Ambassador to Spain, was trying to negotiate a peace settlement at the court of the Emperor at Vienna.

This letter is also informative about Donne's relations with a number of people. Despite the end of his poetic relationship with the Countess of Bedford and his disappointment over her gift to him on entering orders (Letter No. 151), Donne still maintained a social relationship with her. He also mentions Sir Edward Sackville (4th Earl of Dorset), Viscount Doncaster (whom he had accompanied to Germany), my Lady Isabella (who remains unidentified), and my Lady of Lichfield (perhaps a reference to Bishop Overall's wife). Donne also mentions Sir Francis Bacon, who had been impeached as Lord Chancellor and Lord Keeper: Bacon had been deprived of the Great Seal on 1 May 1621 and on 3 May fined ₤40,000, ordered imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure, and forbidden ever to hold any office in the state or commonwealth, sit in Parliament, or come near the Court (Akrigg 299). Donne reports rumors of the amelioration of Bacon's punishment. Within six months of Bacon's conviction, James granted him a pardon for all of his penalties except his exclusion from office. In early 1622 James granted Bacon a pension of ₤1,200 a year to make up for the income he lost with his offices (Akrigg 301).

The accident of my L. of Canterbury (the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot) was the misfortune he had of accidentally killing a game keeper while he was out hunting at Lord Zouch's house at Bramhill on 24 July 1621. The archbishop had been invited to Bramhill to consecrate a new chapel and while there was taken hunting in the park. Bishop Williams and Laud refused to accept consecration by Abbot after the accident, and Abbot was suspended from his duties until a royal commission, after a full inquiry, pronounced him free of guilt. The new bishops were consecrated in November by a committee of bishops (Bald, Life 372). James's attitude to Abbot was sympathetic because of his own passion for hunting (Gosse II: 141). Abbot retained his position as Archbishop until his death on 4 August 1633. Donne's friendship with Abbot at this time suggests that he successfully overcame or avoided any antipathy Abbot may have had toward him as a protege of Somerset's (see Donne's letter to Sir George More (144). Donne also indicates in this letter that he regularly visited not only the Archbishop, his brothers-in-law at Beddington (Sir Nicholas Throckmorton Carey) and Peckham (Sir Thomas Grymes), and Sir John and Lady Danvers (Magdalen Herbert) at Chelsea, but also Sir Henry Hobart (Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas) and Sir Julius Caesar (Master of the Rolls).

My "Lady Nethersoles" was Goodyer's daughter Lucy, whose marriage to Sir Francis Nethersoles Donne had performed. Donne's daughter Constance was friends with Goodyer's daughters, especially Lucy and Mary.

170

Dr. Donne to the Marquesse of Buckingham,
13th. Septemb. 1621.

My most honoured Lord,

I Most humbly beseech your Lordship to afford this ragg of paper a room amongst your evidences. It is your evidence not for a Mannour, but for a man. As I am a Priest it is my sacrifice of prayer to God for your Lordship; and as I am a Priest, made able to subsist, and appear in Gods service by your Lordship, it is a sacrifice of my self to you. I deliver this paper as my Image; and I assist the power of any Conjurer, with this imprecation upon my self, that as he shall tear this paper, this picture of mine, so I may be torn in my fortune, and in my fame, if ever I have any corner in my heart, dispossessed of a zeal to your Lordships service. His Majestie hath given me a royal Key into your Chamber, leave to stand in your presence, and your Lordship hath already such a fortune, as that you shall not need to be afraid of a suitor, when I appear there. So that I protest to your Lordship, I know not what I want, since I cannot suspect. nor fear my self for ever doing, or leaving undone any thing by which I might forfeit that title, of being alwaies

Your Lordships, &c.
J.D.

Source: Cabala (314)

Also in Gosse (II: 147)

Commentary

This letter follows a letter to Buckingham dated 8 August 1621 in which Donne reminds Buckingham of his promise to obtain the deanery of Salisbury for Donne, and, as that is not now possible, that Donne is waiting in a "penurious" state for some other appointment. If the August 8 letter is obsequious, this letter is almost equally so. In both letters Donne describes his absolute dependence on Buckingham and his willingness to take whatever position Buckingham sees fit to offer him. In this letter, however, Donne stands a little on his dignity as a priest; perhaps he recognizes the incongruity in his August 8 letter of asking for a position in the Church while describing himself as so "poore a worme."

171

To S T.H. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

THis evening, which is 5° *October*, I finde your Letter of *Michaelmas* day, and though I see by it, that it is a return of a Letter, not of the last weeks, and thereupon make account, that my last week's Letter hath satisfied you in some things which this Letter commands, concerning *Pauls*, yet for other things I would give you a drowsie relation, for it is that time of night, thogh I called it evening. At the Kings going from hence, upon *Munday* last, we made account to have seen Sir *John Sutclin* Secretary, and Sir *Rob. Weston* Chancellor of the Exchequer, but they are not done, but both are fixed: my L. *Cranfield* received his staffe, with these two suits obtained from the King, That all Assignations might be transferred into the Exchequer, and so no paiments charged upon the Customes, nor Receivers, nor the Court of Wards, &c. And that for a time there might be a damp cast upon Pensions, till they might be considered. In the Low Countries the Armies stirre not. In the Palatinate Sir H. *Vere* attempting the regaining of *Stenie* Castle, was surprised with the Enemy in so much strength, that they write it over for a Master piece, that he was able to make a retreat to *Manheme*: so that now the Enemy is got on that side the River which *Heydelberg* is on, and I know nothing that can stand in his way. My L. *Digby* comes from *Vienna*, before he goes into *Spain*, by Count *Mansfield*, by the Palatinate, by *Paris*; and therefore upon his comming, I shall be able to say something to you. In Sir *John Sutclin* I presume you see an end of Sir *Ro. Naunton*, and we see an end of M^{r} *Tho. Murray* too; I beleeve he comes no more to the Prince. For the triall of my L. of *Canterburies* irregularity, there is a Commission to sixe Bishops, *London, Winchester, Rochester*, and three onely elect, *Lincoln*, S. *Davids*, and *Exeter*: two Judges, L. *Hobard*, and *Dodridge*; two Civilians, Sir H. *Martin*, and D. *Steward*. The consecration of these elect Bishops, and consequently, my being Dean, must attend the issue of this Commission. Sir *Tho. Roe*

> is gone. The Proclamations of putting off the Parliament, till February, are like to outrun this Letter. It is very late; and it is one act, to say Grace after Supper, and to commend my self into the hands of my blessed Saviour, in my bed, and so close this Letter, and mine eies, with the same blessing upon all your family. Amen.
>
> Your poor servant in Chr. Jes.
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 53 (165)

Also in Gosse (II: 149)

Textual Notes

l. 37 Sir John Sutclin] Sir John Suckling

l. 42 to sixe] of sixe

Notes

l. 2 Michaelmas day] 29 September, an English quarter day.

Commentary

The identification of the year the letter was written and the recipient of the letter as Sir Henry Goodyer are both made possible by the relationship between the letter and Letters Nos. 51, 66, and 81. Nos. 51 and 81 are addressed to Goodyer, and No. 66 is addressed to Sir Thomas Lucy, but all four letters are obviously to Goodyer. This letter updates Donne's news of the war in Germany, the movements of Sir John Digby and Count Mansfield, and the inquiry into the Archbishop of Canterbury's accidental killing of the keeper which are discussed in Letters No. 51. He also tells Goodyer that Sir Thomas Roe, a mutual friend, has gone.

Mr. Thomas Murray, a Scot who followed James to England, was a tutor to Prince Charles (Akrigg 49). Donne's news about Goodyer's "seeing an end to Sir Ro. Naunton," combined with his similar reference to seeing an end of Thomas Murray, implies good riddance to both. Sir Robert Naunton was appointed secretary of state on 8 January 1617-18 due to Buckingham's influence. He succeeded Sir Ralph Winwood, who had died three months earlier. In January 1620/21 Naunton entered into negotiations with Cadenet, the French ambassador, without instructions from James, and advised the French that if they desired to have Prince Charles marry Princess Henry Maria they should offer Charles a large portion with the lady. James learned about the conversation through Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, who disliked Naunton, a staunch Protestant. James threatened Naunton with dismissal. In January 1623 he voluntarily retired on a pension of £1000 a year (D.N.B.). Naunton may have disliked Goodyer's leanings toward Catholicism, or he may have had some other disagreement with him.

Sir John Suckling replaced Naunton as secretary of state in March 1622. Sir John Suckling, father of the poet, was married to Martha Cranfield, sister of Donne's friend Lionel Cranfield, created first Earl of Middlesex in 1622. Suckling and Cranfield often conducted business together. Cranfield was a member of the dining club that met at the Mitre that included Donne and Goodyer. Both Cranfield and Suckling contributed prefatory verses to Thomas Coryate's Crudities; by command of Prince Henry these were first published in The Odcombian Banquet (1611). Goodyer borrowed money from Cranfield and in 1617 appointed Cranfield and Richard Martin feoffees in trust for his manor of Bagginton, which he intended to sell to provide portions for his daughters and pay debts

(Prestwich 101). Goodyer presumably would feel that with Cranfield as Lord Treasurer (he was appointed in September 1621) and Sir John Suckling as secretary of state, he could expect some leniency in dealings with the Crown over his debts.

The reference to Sir Robert Weston should be to Sir Richard Weston, created first Earl of Portland by Charles on 17 February 1632-3.

The Royal Commission that inquired into Archbishop Abbot's accidental killing of the game keeper was composed of the Bishop of London, George Mountain; the Bishop of Winchester, Lancelot Andrews; the Bishop of Rochester; and three bishops elect: John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln (made Lord Keeper at the same time); William Laud, Bishop of St. David's; and Valentine Cary, Bishop of Exeter. L. Hobard was Sir Henry Hobart, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, whom Donne visited regularly (see Letters No. 51). Sir H[enry] Martin was a friend of Donne's and later a legal assistant to Laud. He served on many legal committees, including a number with Donne. He also gave the legal judgement on Donne's dispute with Henry Seyliard over Seyliard's claim to Keepston Rectory (Bald, Life 387-88, 540-41, 570-71). Abbot was completely exonerated by the Commission.

Sir H. Vere (Sir Horace Vere) was considered to be "the first English soldier of the day" (Gardiner III: 358). He had extensive experience from the war in Holland and without seeking the post was appointed commander of the English volunteers in Bohemia by Dohna, Frederick's ambassador to England. Vere's force of two thousand volunteers was deployed in the Palatinate while Frederick and his army defended Bohemia. The Palatinate was attacked by the Spanish army under Spinola, which numbered 24,000 men. Donne suggests that Vere's retreat was an act of military skill; Frederick's forces in the Palatinate and Bohemia were everywhere being forced to retreat from position to position by the superior forces of Ferdinand. On 29 October Frederick's army was routed at Prague (Gardiner III: 383). News of the defeat reached England on 24 November, although some did not believe the news, and rumors of another battle with Frederick being victorious circulated for some time.

172

To the worthy Knight Sir Tho. Lucy
[Sir Henry Goodyer].

SIR,

YOur Letter comes to me, at Grace after supper; it is part of the prayer of that Grace, that God will blesse you, and all yours with his best blessings of both kinde. I would write you news; but your love to me, may make you apt to over-beleeve news for my sake. And truly all things that are upon the stage of the world now, are full of such uncertanities, as may justly make any man loth to passe a conjecture upon them; not only because it is hard to see how they wil end, but because it is misintertable and dangerous to conjecture otherwise, then some men would have the event to be. That which is especially in my contemplation, which is the issue of my L. of Canterburies businesse, (for thereupon depends the consecration of my predecessor, upon which the Deanery devolves to the King) is no farther proceeded in yet, then that some of the 10 Commissioners have met once; and upon Saterday next there will be a fuller meeting, and an entrance into the businesse, upon which, much, very much in consequence, depends. Of my L. of Donc. we are only assured, that he is in a good way of convalescence; but of any audience nothing yet. Slacken not your hold of my L. Treasurer, for I have been told that you are in his care. I send you a Copy of that Sermon, but it is not my co-

> py, which I thought my L. of South-hampton
> would have sent me backe. This you must
> be pleased to let me have again, for I borrow
> it: for the other, I will pretermit no time
> to write it; though in good faith, I have
> half forgot it. If in any letter I leave out the
> name of the La. Hunt. or La. Burdell, or
> your daughters, tell them, that I named
> them. I take the falshood upon me; for I
> intend it very really, and very humbly,
> where I am good for any thing in any of
> their services. Our blessed Saviour continue
> and enlarge his blessings to you all, Amen.
> Your humble servant in Chr. Jes.
> 11 Octob. 1621. J. Donne.
>
> Why do you say nothing of, my little book of Cases.

Source: Letters No. 66 (199-200)

Also in Gosse (II: 150-51)

Textual Notes

l. 9	uncertanities]	probably a compositor error for uncertainties
ll. 14/15	mistinter/table]	compositor error for misinterpretable

Commentary

That this letter was written to Goodyer, not Sir Tho. Lucy, is clear for a number of reasons. Donne continues to discuss news included in other letters addressed to Goodyer at this time; he passes on greetings to the Countesses of Bedford and Huntington (an unmistakable indication that the letter was written to Goodyer); he refers to Goodyer's relationship to Lionel Cranfield; he greets Goodyer's daughters; and he inquires about his "little book of Cases," which he refers to in other letters addressed to Goodyer.

Donne's main concern in this letter is the Royal Commission into the Archbishop of Canterbury's accidental killing of a game keeper, which delays his appointment as Dean of St. Paul's. For a description of the incident which threatened Archbishop Abbot's career, see the Commentary for Letter No. 169; for the members of the Commission, Letter No. 171. Donne's predecessor, Valentine Carey, was promoted to Bishop of Exeter (see Commentary, Letter No. 173).

Donne informs Goodyer of Doncaster's convalescence and exhorts Goodyer to be persistent with the new Lord Treasurer, Lionel Cranfield, who was an old friend and favorably disposed to Goodyer. My L. of Southampton (Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton) was a friend of Donne's and a member of Lincoln's Inn. Donne contributed a stained glass panel to the refurbished chapel at Lincoln's Inn which showed Southampton's coat of arms, and those of several other of Donne's friends who were peers and members of the Inn (Bald, Life 385). Southampton had also attended Donne's first sermon at Paul's Cross on 24 March 1617.

La. Hunt refers to the Countess of Huntington, in whose household Goodyer still served. La. Burdell must be an error for Lady Bedford. Goodyer was still in contact with the Countess of Bedford, as was Donne. Donne consistently sends greetings to Goodyer's daughters in his letters to Goodyer at this time.

173

To Sir H.G. at Polesworth [Goodyer].

SIR,
THis 25 I have your letter of 21, which
I tell you so punctually, because by it,
nor by any other, I doe not discern that you
received my pacquet of Books; not that I
looked for so quick a return of the Sermon,
nor of my Cases of conscience, but that I

forget so absolutely what I write, and am so sure that I write confidently to you, that it is some pain to remain in any jealousie that any Letter is miscarried. That which I writ to you of my L. Treasur. disposition to you, I had from M^{r} Har; and I understood it to be his desire to convey it through me. The last account which we have of my L. Donc. is, by Letters of the 2° of this; by which also we saw, that the first Letters of his convalescence, were but propheticall; for he was let blood a second time, and is not strong enough yet to receive audience. Though I be not Dean of Pauls yet, my L. of Warwick hath gone so low, as to command of me the office of being Master of my game, in our wood about him in Essex. I pray be you content to be my officer too, the Steward of my services to all to whom you know them to be due in your walk, and continue your own assurance that I am

Your affectionate servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 81 (226-27)

Also in Gosse (II: 152)

Commentary

Donne mentions in this letter that he has not yet been officially appointed Dean of St. Paul's, but that the appointment is imminent is shown by the Earl of Warwick's (Sir Robert Rich; see Letter No. 89) request that he be made Master of the game in the forest near his residence in Essex belonging to St. Paul's. Donne learned of his appointment by 13 September 1621 when he wrote to thank Buckingham for the promotion (see Letter No. 170). The appointment was not made, however, until 22 November because the incumbent, Valentine Carey, was not consecrated Bishop of Exeter until 18 November.

That this letter was written in October can be shown from Donne's reference to finally receiving a letter from Goodyer indicating that

Goodyer had received Donne's "Cases of conscience." In a letter dated 11 October, Donne anxiously asks Goodyer why he has not mentioned receiving them.

As in other letters, Donne informs Goodyer of any news he can discover that has to do with Goodyer's financial situation. The Lord Treasurer at this time was Lionel Cranfield, an old friend of Donne's, who had just been appointed to this position on 30 September, and whose attitude toward Goodyer's precarious financial situation was crucial (see also *Letters* No. 53).

Donne also writes to Goodyer about Viscount Doncaster's illness. Doncaster was at the time Ambassador to France.

174

A Letter from J.D. *to my Lord's Grace of* Canterbury, *concerning a third Person*.

May it please your Grace,

UPon the 28th. of this month, I received this Pacquet, thus directed to your Grace, by one of those Merchants that trade at *Frankford*. By that Letter, by which they were accompanied, and recommended to me, by the Author, I find them to have been consigned into that Merchants hands, *Septemb*. 21. But the Booksare now brought hither, by so great a circuit, as, comming with them. I imagine, this Pacquet to your Grace hath suffered no other diversion, than the rest. If the Author be formerly known to your Grace, it may ill become me to add any thing: If he be not, your Grace may be pleased to receive this testimonie of him from me, That in those parts where I have had some conversation with him, he hath the approbation of a learned and painfull man in his Ministry, and is otherwise, in the af-

> fairs of the world, an intelligent person. Sometimes I receive Letters from him, and return some. And if your Grace be pleased to use my service, by which any thing may be said to use him hereafter, I most humbly offer to your Grace in this, and all wherein your Grace shall be pleased to command it, the service of
>
> Your Grace's humblest and
> thankfullest servant.

Source: T.M.C. No. 172 (309)

Also in Gosse (II: 178)

Notes

1. 4 Frankford: Frankfurt. There was an important annual book fair at Frankfurt.

1. 9 Booksare: Book fare [Book fair]. Presumably the copyist misread the f for an old-style s.

Commentary

This letter is dated from the Archbishop of Canterbury's (George Abbot) reply which follows it in the Tobie Mathews Collection. While that letter is not dated, the Archbishop addresses Donne as Dean, which means that the letter was written after Donne's appointment as Dean of St. Paul's, an appointment made on 22 November 1621. Abbot remained Archbishop of Canterbury until his death in 1633 (J. P. Kenyon 114). Through a book merchant, Donne has received books for himself and for the Archbishop from an unidentified continental theologian whom Donne had met and with whom he had corresponded.

1622

175

Doctor Dunne, in kindnesse to an absent Friend. [To Sir Tobie Mathew?]

SIR,

I Am sure, that neither my thanks, nor yet my excuses, for not presenting them sooner, can be brought to you by a more acceptable hand, than his, by whose favour I am sending them to you now. I wish I could as well have made him any way see my desires, to serve both you and him: but I hope to have your self an immediate witnesse thereof, at the end of your Progresse; and that amongst many good Fortunes, which God intends to this noble Friend of yours, and mine, one will be, that he may transplant you out of the country, and fixe you fast in the Town; whither as soon as you be come, you shall (if this impertinencie of mine, may not look more like a menace, than a promise) meet with no man's affection, which will more faithfully be all your own, than mine.

Source: T.M.C. No. 28 (63)

Commentary

This letter is the first Donne letter to appear in the Tobie Mathews Collection and has been accepted as Donne's largely on the basis of the title, which links it with the two letters that follow it (pp. 64 and 67). Unlike the two following letters, however, this letter contains little internal evidence to help identify the recipient or date. (Feil dates the other two letters January-February 1612 and before 9 March 1619.) Feil (333) conjectures that this letter was written after 1621 when Sir Tobie Mathew had returned to live in England after his exile, but gives no reason why this later date would be more suitable than 1617 to Oct. 1618 when Mathew was also in England. Donne appears to apologize for not greeting the recipient sooner after his return. The noble friend who will deliver the letter to Sir Tobie Mathew could be George Gage, whom Mathew introduced to Donne by letter during Donne's trip to Germany with Doncaster. Gage fits the two characteristics of the mutual friend Donne describes: he was the most acceptable person to take a letter to Mathew and he was believed to have a promising future ahead of him. Mathew states in a letter to Doncaster that he "loved [Gage] more than any other thing in the world" (Feil 155). Gage was so highly regarded by Doncaster and others at court that he was even rumored to be a candidate for Secretary of State, replacing Secretary Naunton (Feil 155 and n. 5).

176

To the best Knight Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
AT your conveniency, I pray send my
Lady Bedford this inclosed, but be
pleased to put your self to some inconveni-
ence, (if it be so) to kisse my Lady Ruthins
hands in my name, and to present my very
humble service to her, and tell her, that
no ill conscience of having deserved her,
but only an obedience to her command-
ments, keeps me from saying to her self thus
much; that this day I received a letter from
my L. of Kent, written yesterday at Wrest:
in that his Lordships sends me word, that
that favour which he hath formerly done
me, in giving me Blouham, is now likely to
fall upon me, because the Incumbent is
dangerously ill: and because this is the sea-
son in which he removes from Wrest thi-
ther, he desires (for I give you his own
word) that he may be accommodate there,
(if it fall now) as heretofore. Out of my
absolute and intire readiness to serve that
family, I sent back his messenger with this

> answer, that I esteemed it a great part of my good fortune, that I should become worthy to be commanded by him. If my Lady will be pleased to direct me in what particular manner I may best serve her purposes, I shall gladly waite upon her at any time, to receive her command with as much devotion and thankfulnesse as I received the benefit. I beseech you make her beleeve it, as in any place you beleeve
> 26 Febr. 1621. Your poor servant in Chr. Jes.
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 57 (176-77)

Also in Gosse (II: 157-58)

Textual Notes

l. 7 deserved] deserted?

l. 12 Lordships sends] probably a compositor's error for Lordship sends

Notes

l. 4 Lady Ruthins] Lady Ruthyn (see Commentary)

l. 14 Blouham] Blunham, Bedfordshire (see Commentary)

Commentary

This letter, which Bald discusses in detail (Life 412-14), informs Goodyer about Donne's appointment to the benefice of Blunham in Bedfordshire, a living in the gift of the Earl of Kent, Charles Grey of Ruthyn. Donne asks Goodyer to present his services to Lady Ruthyn (Elizabeth Talbot), the wife of the Earl of Kent's son and heir, Henry Grey. Wrest Park was the Earl of Kent's principal residence. Bald suggests that the Earl's request to Donne to be accommodated at Blunham probably indicates that the original parsonage came to be the manor house and, hence, the Earl sought the rector's permission to occupy it. Donne was appointed on 18 April 1622 (Bald, Life 413, n. 4). There is only one previous reference to the Earl of Kent in Donne's letters (Letters, p. 202).

177

To my worthy friend F.H. [Sir Henry Goodyer]

> SIR,
> I Can scarce doe any more this week then send you word why I writ not last. I had then seposed a few daies for my preparation to the Communion of our B. Saviours body; and in that solitarinesse and arraignment of my self, digested some meditations of mine, and apparelled them (as I use) in the form of a Sermon: for since I have not yet utterly delivered my self from this intemperance of scribling (though I thank God my accesses are lesse and lesse vehement) I make account that to spend all my little stock of knowledge upon matter of delight, were the same error, as to spend a fortune upon Masks and Banqueting houses: I chose rather to build in this poor fashion, some Spittles, and Hospitals, where the poor and impotent sinner may finde some relief, or at least understanding of his infirmity. And if they be too weak to serve posterity, yet for the present by contemplation of them, &c.

Source: Letters No. 82 (228)

Also in Gosse (II: 255)

Commentary

Gosse (II: 254) suggests that this letter was written around 1628 and suspects that F.H. in the address is a misprint for G.H. (George Herbert). Bennett, however, correctly identifies Goodyer as the recipient ("Donne's Letters to Severall Persons" 137) because the letter suggests that Donne writes weekly to his correspondent. Bennett does not date the letter. The contents of the letter, however, suggest that Donne is referring to the preparation of a "Spital-sermon" during the previous week. "Spital" (hospital) sermons were preached on Easter Monday and Tuesday from a special pulpit at St. Mary Spital (afterwards at St. Bride's and finally at Christ Church in the City [O.E.D.]). Donne gave his "Spital sermon" on 22 April (Easter Monday) 1622; hence, this letter must belong to the following week. The sermon is number 25 in XXVI Sermons. Another reference in the letter that helps to date it is Donne's reference to Banqueting Houses. The old Banqueting House of James I burned down in 1619. The new banqueting house, designed by Inigo Jones, was officially completed in March 1622 (Akrigg 284), a month prior to the date of this letter. Donne's reference to the new banqueting house is a pointed criticism of James' spending priorities.

Donne's letter further indicates that he undertook solitary meditations to prepare him specially to celebrate Easter Communion.

178

To the right worp^{ll}
S^{r} Henry Martin
Kt.

S^{r}
I wayted upon yo^{w} heretofore, when a Cause w^{ch} concerns me, was
brought before yo^{w} and others, in another way, as delegates: It
ys for a p^{r}tended Resignation of y^{e} churche of keiston, upon
w^{ch} pretence one Mr. Sillian procurd a superin[stitution.]
To my L: keeper I haue declard the direct truth of y^{e}
whole proceedinge for matter of fact; and for matter of
law, I haue told him, and them, that if any man learned
in eyther law, of Mr. Sillians own Counsayle, would say

that y^{e} church upon such a Resignation was voyd, I would relinquish yt. And now, I ame enformed that my L: keeper hath referrd that poynte to yo^{w}. If I had not come home from Bedfordshire, late and weary, I would haue wayted upon y^{ow}; but it had been onely to salute y^{ow}, not much to solicite y^{ow} (for that I know needs not) that y^{ow} wyll be pleasd to take that poynte into y^{or} good consideration:. and so, S^{r}, I rest

y^{or}euer to be disp[ ]sd
J: DONNE

At my house at S: pauls.
9^{o} Maÿ. 1622.

Outside of letter:

[ ]
[ ] unto my Lo: Keep
about a Pe [ ] of
Institution unto the
Parsonage of Keyston
in Harrington [ ]

Source: Harvard f MW Eng 930 (Beal No. 24)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 156)

Textual Notes

l. 3 Keiston] Keyston

l. 4 Mr. Sillian] Mr. Seyliard

Commentary

The rectory of Keyston was Donne's first benefice, granted to him by the King 16 January 1615 (P.R.O., Patent Roll, 13 James I, pt. 29 No. 3 [C 66/2084]) over a year after he had taken orders (Bald, Life 317). Bald suggests that Donne accepted two country rectories with the understanding that he would be free to remain in London and hire curates to perform the required duties. The dispute about the rectory at Keyston occurred as follows. Shortly after Donne was presented with Keyston, a warrant under the sign manual appears for the presentation of Keyston to

John Scott (8 March 1615/16, CSP. Dom., 1611-18, p. 353), "but the grant went no further" (Bald, Life 317). That there was some confusion about who was getting Keyston is suggested by Donne's promise to use his influence to have Scott appointed as his successor when Donne received a better preferment. Donne resigned before 8 April 1621 when he thought he would become Dean of Salisbury. He did not, however, become Dean of Salisbury and therefore withheld his resignation. This was completely proper on Donne's part because, although he had resigned in the proper legal way "by an instrument executed before a public notary and in the presence of witnesses," his resignation was not valid until accepted by the proper ordinary. His resignation was finally accepted on 20 October when Donne was sure of his appointment as Dean of St. Paul's. The manor and advowson (right to grant the living) of Keyston in the meantime were given by King James to James Wingfield. The law was that if a patron did not appoint someone within six months of the occurrence of a vacancy, the patron's right of presentation lapsed and the right devolved to the bishop or the metropolitan. Because Keyston was in the diocese of Lincoln and the see of Lincoln was vacant because Dr. Williams had not yet been consecrated, any right of presentation would devolve to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who on 18 October appointed Henry Seyliard, a new graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Donne, however, had not resigned and challenged Seyliard's claim in the Court of Delegates on behalf of Scott.

> In accordance with regular procedure the Archbishop appointed a panel of five civilians (including Sir Henry Martin) of whom any two could hear and determine the case. The judges' commission was exhibited in court on 23 November, the day after Donne was elected Dean, and there were hearings on 23 January, 29 January, and 6 February. (Bald, Life 389)

By 6 February, however, Donne's resignation had been accepted and Wingfield had appointed Scott. Seyliard and Scott then took their claims to the Court of Chancery. The Lord Keeper asked Sir Henry Martin for a report on the ecclesiastical law as it affected the case. Martin's report written on the blank pages of Donne's letter declared that the patron's "tyme to present vpon payn of laps shall not beginn to runn before the Ordinarie have pronounced the church voyd & the same bee intimated vnto the Patron" (Bald, Life 388). Donne's view of his resignation and Scott's appointment were thus both upheld. Bald (Life 570-71) includes a transcript of the judgement Sir Henry Martin sent to the Lord Keeper.

179

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

IF I would calumniate, I could say no ill of that Gentleman: I know not whether my L. or my selfe tooke the first apprehension of it; but I remember that very soone wee concurred in a good opinion of him; thereupon for justifying our owne forwardnesse, wee observed him more throughly, and found all the way good reason to ratifie our first estimation of him. This gave my L. occasion to send him abroade in his Service after: how hee satisfied him in that imployment, indeed I know not. But, that I disguise nothing, I remember my L. told mee sometimes in his absence, that hee had not Account from him of some things, which hee had deposed in him. And at his entering into his Coach, at his last going, I asked my L. Goes not the Gentleman with you? and hee told mee with some coldnesse no. So that if you bee not pressed to a Resolution, you may bee pleased to forbeare a few dayes, till I may occasionally discerne, whether hee have demerited or sunke in my L. opinion: And then you shall have another Character of him from

25. Julii.

Your very humble and thankfull
Servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 103 (276)

Also in Gosse (II: 165)

Commentary

This letter can be dated 1622 because Letters No. 105 was written as a postscript for this letter and it is dated 2 August 1622. Gosse interprets this letter to mean that

> Ker has thought of employing in his service some one who had been in Lord Doncaster's train in the embassy to Germany two years before, and that he has asked Donne for a confidential report of this man's fitness, to which the Dean returns a very scrupulous reply, his hesitation being founded on the fact that Doncaster had not taken the same gentleman with him to Paris in April 1622. (II: 165)

Gosse is correct but omits part of the meaning of the letter. The letter indicates that "my Lord," almost certainly Doncaster, sent the gentleman abroad in his service while he remained in England and that Doncaster's dissatisfaction with the gentleman occurred while the gentleman was abroad. The letter makes clear that the gentleman has subsequently returned to England and that Donne expected him to accompany the Lord "at his last going," probably Doncaster's appointment as Ambassador to France.

180

To the Honourable Knight, Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

THis is but a Postscript to the last Letter, and it is onely to tell you, that it was an impertinent jealousie that I conceived of that Gentlemans absence from my L. for he gives that full Testimonie of him, that he never discerned any kinde of unfitnesse in him for any imployment, except too much goodnesse; and Conscientiousnesse may sometimes make him somewhat lesse fit for some kindes of businesse, then a man of a looser raine. And this is all that I conceive to have been in the commandment wherewith you honoured

2. Aug 1622. Your very humble and thankfull
servant in Christ Jesus
John Donne:

Source: Letters No. 105 (279)

Also in Gosse (II: 165)

Commentary

This letter continues Donne's letter of 25 July to Sir Robert Ker (Letters No. 103) in which he responds to an inquiry of Ker's about an unidentified gentleman's suitability for employment. See also the Commentary to Letters No. 103.

181

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Have the honour of your Letter, which, I am almost sorry to have received: some few daies before the receit thereof D. Turner, who accompanied my L. Carow to Sion to dinner, shewed me a Letter from you, from which I conceived good hopes that your businesses being devolved into the hands of the Treasurer, had been in much more forwardnesse, then by your letter to me they appear to be. I beseech God establish them, and hasten them, and with them, or without them, as he sees most conducible to his purpose upon you, continue in you a relying upon him, and a satisfaction in his waies. I know not whether any Letter from your son, or any other report, may have given you any mention of me; he writ to me from the *Compter*, that he was under a trifling arrest, and that 3^{l} and some little more would discharge him. I sent my man with that money, but bid him see it emploied for his discharge: he found more actions, and returned. Next day he writ to me that 8^{l} would discharge him, and that M^{r} *Selden* would lay down half. But M^{r} *Selden* and I speaking together, thought it the fittest way, to respite all, till, in a few daies, by his writing to you, we might be directed therein; and in the mean time, took order with the Keeper to accommodate him, and I bade my man *Martin*, as from himself, to serve his present want with some things. Since we told him, that we would attend a return of his Letter to you, I heard no more of him, but I hear he is out. Whosoever serves you with relations from this Town, I am sure prevents me of all I can say. The Palatinate is absolutely lost; for before this Letter come to you, we make account that *Heydelberg* and *Frankindale* is lost, and *Manheme* distressed. *Mansfield* came to *Breda*, and *Gonzales*, to *Brussels*, with great losses on both sides, but equall. The P. of *Orange* is but now come to *Breda*, and with him, all that he is able to make, even out of the Garrisons of their Towns. The ways of victuall to *Spinolaes* Army, are almost all precluded by him, and he likely to put upon the raising of *Spinola*, between whom and the Town, there are hotter disputes, then ever our times saw. The Secretary of the States here shewed me a Letter yesternight, that the Town spends 6000 pound of powder a day, and hath spent since the siege 250^{m} pounds. *Argits* Regiment and my L. *Vaux*, are so diminished by commings away, as that both (I think) make not now in Muster above 600.

M^{r} *Gage* is returning to *Rome*, but of his Negotiation I dare say nothing by a Letter of adventure. The direction which his Ma^{ty} gave for Preachers, had scandalized many; therefore he descended to pursue them with certain reasons of his proceedings therein; and I had commandment to publish them in a Sermon at the Crosse, to as great a Congregation as ever I saw together, where they received comfortable assurance of his Ma^{ties} constancy in Religion, and of his desire that all men should be bred in the knowledge of such things, as might preserve them from the superstition of *Rome*. I presume it is but a little while before we shall see you here, but that little time is likely to produce many things greatly considerable. Present, I pray, my thankfull services to your good daughters. I can give them no better a room in my prayers, and wishes, then my poore *Constance* hath, and they have that; so have you Sir, with

Your very true friend and servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 83 (229-32)

Also in Gosse (II: 166-68)

Notes

l. 41 Manheme] Manheim

l. 47 Spinolaes] Spinola's

Commentary

This letter was sent to Goodyer enclosed with *Letters* No. 75, dated 24 September and datable to 1622 by Donne's discussion of events in the Palatinate. Hence this letter was written shortly before 24 September. Hester (xxi) dates the letter 19 September, but I can find no evidence for this specific date. Bald (*Life* 439) suggests that Donne's dinner at Sion House (the residence of the Earl of Northumberland) occurred shortly before 21 September, when Edward Alleyn wrote in his diary that he and Donne had been guests of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Croydon along with Sir Edward Sackville. The dinner guests at Sion House also included L. Carow and D. Turner, who remain otherwise unidentified.

Donne goes on to speak of the arrest of Sir Henry's son, John, for debt. He was being held at a Compter, the name of certain city prisons for debtors. In his will, Donne's father left money to all the prisons of London and the suburbs, including the Compters in Paultrie Street, Woodstrete, and Southwarke. The Mr. Selden to whom Donne refers was John Selden, the eminent lawyer and orientalist. In 1617 Selden wrote De Diis Syris, which established his reputation as an orientalist. He published his History of Tythes in 1618 and thereby offended the clergy; the book was suppressed by public authority. Bald (Life 438, n. 4) suggests that Donne's letter shows that Selden was friends with both Donne and Goodyer.

Donne's letter also describes the final battles in the loss of the Palatinate.

Donne also sends news of religious events. He informs Goodyer that he has preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross explaining King James's directions for preachers. This sermon was given on 15 September and published by itself in 1622 (Simpson, Prose Works 344). Donne also informs Goodyer of George Gage's return to Rome. Gage, a friend of Sir Tobie Mathew, was sent to Rome to clarify the conditions the Pope would impose before granting a dispensation for the Spanish match.

Donne ends with sending his greetings to Goodyer's daughter and a reference to his own daughter Constance, a feature common to Donne's letters to Goodyer during this period.

182

To Sir H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,
THis is a second Letter: the enclosed
was written before. Now we are
sure that Heidelberge is taken, and entred
with extreme cruelties. Almost all the de-
fendors forsook their stations; only Sir
Ger. Herbert maintained his nobly, to the
repulsing of the enemy three times, but ha-
ving ease in the other parts, 800 new fresh
men were put upon his quarter, and after
he had broke 4 Pikes, and done very well,
he was shot dead in the place. Manheim was
soon after besieged, and is still. Heydelth
was lost the 6 of this moneth. the K. upon
news of this, sent to the Spanish Ambassa-
our, that the people were like to resent it,
and therefore, if he doubted ought, he
should have a Guard: but I do not see, that
he seems to need it, in his own opinion,
neither, intruth does he; the people are flat:
or trust in God, and the Kings ways. Sir
Hor. Vere hath written to his wife, (as I am
told) a Letter in the nature of a will, for the
disposing of his estate and children, as
though he did not account to see her any
more, but yet Manheim cannot be lost, but
by storming. Your man stays, and our
bell rings me into the Church; there Sir,
I shall recommend you to Gods goodnesse,
with
24 Septemb. Your friend
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 75 (211-12)

Also in Gosse (II: 168)

Commentary

This letter accompanied Letters No. 83 and was written a few days later than that letter. The date (24 September) is included in the closing; the events Donne describes in this letter concerning the war in the Palatinate confirm that date and that the year was 1622.

Donne describes the closing stages of the war in the Palatinate. Frederick's capital of Heidelberg surrendered in September (as Donne says) after an eleven-week siege. Sir Horace Vere, the Commander of English volunteers in the Palatinate, who, Donne says, sent his will to his wife in September, surrendered Mannheim in October. Frankenthal was the last city held by Frederick, and it also surrendered in October. Donne's opinion that Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, needed no protection, despite the imminence of the complete defeat of Frederick (James's son-in-law) and the loss of his hereditary domains, contrasts sharply with the public mood of November 1620 after Frederick had been driven from Bohemia in the battle of White Mountain outside Prague. At that time Gondomar had been threatened, and had asked the King's Council for protection. Gondomar had even considered withdrawing to Dunkirk (Gardiner III: 385-86).

183

A Letter from J.D. *to the Queen of* Bohemia, *with the presenting of the same Sermon to her*.

May it please your Majesty,
THat Hand, which Almighty God
sees, at many midnights, lifted up to
him in your Majestie's behalf, your Maje-
sty hath, before this time, vouchsafed to see,
in this manner, offered to your own eyes.
I never come to this boldnesse, but when I
have tried before, how your Royall Fa-
ther, and Royall Brother, have accepted
these things, which I adventure to present
to your Majestie's hand. In this Sermon,
I have more than the acceptation of my
service in Printing it, for I have a com-
mandment from his Majestie to make it
publick. And, in all things, that have any

influence upon the Publique, the second
thoughts of every man belongs to your Majestie; much more in me, who have tasted
of your easinesse, to pardon the rashness and
boldnesse, of your Majestie's most humble
and devoted, &c.

Source: T.M.C. No. 169 (304)

Also in Gosse (II: 161)

Commentary

This letter refers to Donne's first published sermon, which was given 15 September 1622 and published immediately by order of King James. Gosse therefore dates the letter October 1622. The sermon itself bears only the year of publication, 1622. In this sermon Donne was required to explain King James's new Instructions to Preachers to the public in a sermon preached at St. Paul's Cross. Donne's explanation to the Queen of Bohemia that he never sends her any of his sermons without their first being accepted by King James and Prince Charles shows that Donne was careful to protect both himself and the Princess from any suspicions of subversion or unorthodoxy and indicates the volatile connection between religion and politics at James's court.

184

To Sir H. Wotton. [Sir Henry Goodyer]
Octob. the 4th 1622. almost ad midnight.

SIR,
ALL our moralities are but our outworks, our Christianity is our Citadel;
a man who considers duty but the dignity
of his being a man, is not easily beat from
his outworks, but from his Christianity
never; and therefore I dare trust you, who

contemplates them both. Every distemper of the body now, is complicated with the spleen, and when we were young men we scarce ever heard of the spleen. In our declinations now, every accident is accompanied with heavy clouds of melancholy; and in our youth we never admitted any. It is the spleen of the minde, and we are affected with vapors from thence; yet truly, even this sadnesse that overtakes us, and this yeelding to the sadnesse, is not so vehement a poison (though it be no Physick neither) as those false waies, in which we sought our comforts in our looser daies. You are able to make rules to your self, and our B. Saviour continue to you an ability to keep within those rules. And this particular occasion of your present sadnesse must be helped by the rule, for, for examples you will scarce finde any, scarce any that is not encombred and distressed in his fortunes. I had locked my self, sealed and secured my self against all possibilities of falling into new debts, and in good faith, this year hath thrown me 400l lower then when I entred this house. I am a Father as well as you, and of children (I humbly thank God) of as good dispositions; and in saying so, I make account that I have taken my comparison as high as I could goe; for in good faith, I beleeve yours to be so: but as those my daughters (who are capable of such considerations) cannot but see my desire to accommodate them in this world, so I think they will not murmure if heaven must be their Nunnery, and they associated to the B. virgins there: I know they would be content to passe their lives in a Prison, rather then I should macerate my self for them, much more to suffer the mediocrity of my house, and my means, though that cannot preferre them: yours are such too, and it need not that patience, for your fortune doth not so farre exercise their patience. But to leave all in Gods hands, from whose hands nothing can be wrung by whining but by praying, nor by praying without the *Fiat voluntas tua*. Sir, you are used to my hand, and, I think have leisure to spend some time in picking out sense, in ragges; else I had written lesse, and in longer time. Here is room for an *Amen*; the prayer ---- so I am going to my

bedside to make for all you and all yours,
with
Your true friend and servant in Chr. Jesus
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 43 (134-37)

Also in Gosse (II: 169-70)

Textual Notes

heading: almost ad midnight: almost at midnight?

l. 58: in: n is written as a subscript.

Notes

l. 54: *Fiat voluntas tua*] Your will be done.

Commentary

This letter was written to Sir Henry Goodyer. The subjects discussed in this letter are taken up again in Letters No. 61, which can clearly be shown to have been written to Goodyer (i.e., Donne's and Goodyer's financial problems, and the problems of arranging marriages for their daughters). Wotton cannot possibly have been the recipient of this letter because he was a life-long bachelor, with no children.

Donne's letter appears to respond to one of Goodyer's in which Goodyer discusses a blow to his financial situation which makes providing portions for his daughters impossible and hence means that they will likely remain unmarried. Perhaps Goodyer's hope of receiving some financial assistance or relief through the Lord Treasurer, Lionel Cranfield, was destroyed at this time. He and Donne had discussed that possibility in earlier letters of the fall of 1622.

Donne's figurative language at the beginning of this letter makes it clear that Goodyer is on the defensive.

185

To the Honourable Knight Sir G. P.
[Sir Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

I Would have intermitted this week without writing, if I had not found the name of my Lady *Huntington* in your Letter. The devotion which I owe, and (in good faith) pay in my best prayers for her good, in all kinde awakens me to present my humble thanks for this, that her Ladiship retains my name in her memory: she never laid obligation upon any man, readier to expresse his acknowledgement of them, to any servant of her servants; I am bound to say much of this, for your indemnity; because though I had a little preparation to her knowledge in the house where I served at first, yet, I think, she took her characters of me, from you: And, at what time soever she thought best of me in her life, I am better then that, for my goodnesse is my thankfulnesse, and I am every day fuller of that then before, to her La^{p}. I say nothing to you of forein names in this Letter, because your son Sir *Francis* is here. For that which you write concerning your son, I onely gave my man *Martin* in charge, to use his interest in the Keeper, that your son should fall under no wants there, which it seems your son discharged, for I hear not of them. For other trifles, I bad my man let him have whatsoever he asked, so, as it might seem to come from him, and not me; and laying that look upon it, it came to almost nothing. Tell both your daughters a peece of a storie of my *Con*. which may accustome them to endure disappointments in this world: An honourable person (whose name I give you in a schedule to burn, lest this Letter should be mis-laid) had an intention to give her one of his sons, and had told it me, and would have been

> content to accept what I, by my friends, could have begged for her; but he intended that son to my Profession, and had provided him already 300^{l} a year, of his own gift in Church livings, and hath estated 300^{l} more of inheritance for their children: and now the youth, (who yet knows nothing of his fathers intention nor mine) flies from his resolutions for that Calling, and importunes his Father to let him travell. The girle knows not her losse, for I never told her of it: but truly, it is a great disappointment to me. More then these, Sir, we must all suffer, in our way to heaven, where, I hope you and all yours shall meet
>
> Your poor friend, and affectionate servant
> J. Donne.
>
> 18 Octob.
> 1622.

Source: Letters No. 61 (184-86)

Also in Gosse (II: 170-71)

Commentary

That this letter was written to Goodyer is clear from Donne's reference to his weekly habit of writing: he wrote a letter to Goodyer every Tuesday. Donne's authorship is also indicated by his greetings to Lady Huntington, in whose household Goodyer served; by Donne's reference to Sir Francis Nethersole (Goodyer's son-in-law); by Donne's explanation of his help for Goodyer's son John, who was arrested for debt; and by Donne's greetings to Goodyer's daughters and inclusion for them of news about his own daughter Constance.

Donne habitually sent greetings to the Countess of Huntington through Goodyer when Goodyer became attached to her household, and often sent greetings to the Countess of Bedford through Goodyer, who remained in close contact with her even after he left her household for the

Countess of Huntington's. Donne no longer includes news about the Palatinate, which by this point had fallen, because Sir Francis Nethersole, formerly the king's agent at Prague, had returned to England. Goodyer could thus learn first hand of the events of the war, and probably Nethersole was informed of subsequent events. Perhaps, also, with Nethersole's return from Prague, Goodyer's interest in events on the Continent lessened. Goodyer had obviously written a letter in response to Donne's Letters No. 83, in which Donne asked Goodyer what to do to aid his son, who had been arrested for debt. Goodyer appears to be inquiring how much money Donne spent on his son, and Donne is replying that he spent only an insignificant amount. Gosse (II: 170) misapplies the discussion about Goodyer's son to Goodyer's son-in-law, Sir Francis Nethersole, because Donne refers to "your son Sir Francis" in one sentence and in the next goes on to discuss Goodyer's son (John) being arrested for debt. Letters No. 83, however, makes clear that Donne is referring to John Goodyer.

The rest of the letter consists of Donne's describing his disappointment at the loss of an advantageous marriage for his daughter Constance that had been arranged but not finalized. The anecdote was, presumably, intended to cheer up Goodyer's youngest daughters, whose difficulty in marrying was the lack of a portion, by showing them that Donne's daughter also had disappointments. Constance's prospective bridegroom remains unidentified.

186

[To Sir Thomas Roe]

If yo^r Lps chaplaine be as well shipd, as my letter ys shipd in him, they come both well to yor Lp: Myne ys but a vessell for another neyther, for now when I begin to write, I remember a commandement w^{ch} my L- of Carlile layd upon me, to call for a letter from him, upon ye first commodity of sendinge; and before thys letter be seald, I hope he wyll returne from Court. If he do not, I may haue leaue to say somethinge, both of that w^{ch} he would, and that w^{ch} he would not haue sayd in hys [own] letter: He would not haue sayd, that w^{ch} I may; that he ys ye directest man yt euer I knew; but he would haue sayd, that he ys as much [-] directed upon yo^w, as any: for, in good fayth, he apprehends euery where, any occasion of testifienge well of yo^r Lp: [To speake] In that language, w^{ch} y^{ow} know to be [myne, that ys farre inough, (at least), from flattery, he provides for hys ease and hys thrift, in doinge so; for, truly, I haue met no case anywhere, when the delyveringe of a good opinion of yo^w, or a iudgement upon any of yo^r actions, [costs] any man any thinge; or exercises him against an opposition. O^r B: Sauyor giue y^w the comfort of yt all yo^r way, and y^e reward of yt, at last. Many graines make up the bread that feeds us; and many thornes make up the Crown y^t must glorify us; and one of those thornes, ys, for the most part, the stinginge calumny of others tongues. Thys, (for any thinge that [concernd the publique) y^w had not in yo^r last employment; though then y^w had a dommestique satan, a viper, a tongue-stinger, in yo^r own house. In thys employment, yo^w haue beene euery way delyverd from yt; I never heard yor priuate nor publique actions calumniated; so yo^w haue the lesse thorns to make up that Crowne. But, S^r, since y^t Crown ys made of thornes, be not w^{t}out them. when y^w contemplate chr: Jes. crownd w^t thorns, remember that those ~~or~~ thorns, w^{ch} y^w see stand out, hurt him not; those w^{ch} wounded him, were bent inward. Outward thorns of Calumny, and mis-interpretation do we us least harme; Innocency despises them; or frinds and iust examiners of the case blunt or breake them. finde thorns w^{t}in; a woundinge sense of sin; bring y^{ow} the thorns, and christ wyll make yt a Crown; or do y^w make yt a Crowne where two ends meet, and make a Circle, (consider yo^r selfe, from one mother to another, f^{ro} y^e wombe to y^e graue) and Christ will make yt a Crown of glory. Add not yo^w to my thorns, by giuinge any yll interpretations of my silence or slacknes in writinge: y^w, who haue so longe accustomd to assist me, w^t yo^r good opinion, and testimonies, and benefits, wyll not easily do that; but if y^w haue at any tyme declind towards yt, I beseech yo^w let thys haue some waight towards re-rectifienge y^w, y^t y^e assuduity of doinge y^e churche of god, that seruice., w^{ch}, (in a poor measure) I ame thought to be able to do, possesses me, and fills me. yo^w know, S^r, that the Astronomers of y^e world are not so much exercisd, about all y^e Constellations, and theyr motions, formerly apprehended [and beleeud, as when there arises a new, and irregular meteor. Many of these, thys treaty of y^e marriage of y^e prince hath producd, in or firmament, in or diuinity; and many men, measuringe publique actions, w^t private affections, haue been [scandu-[lizd and have admitted suspicions of a tepidnes in very high places. Since

Ciuill acts, in fauor of the papists, haue been w^t some p^{r}cipitation over-dangerrously mis--applyed too. It ys true, there ys a maior proposition; but the Conclusions ys too soon made, if there be not a minor too. I know to be sory for some things yt are donne, (y^t ys, sorry yt o^r tymes are overtaken w^t a necessity to do them) proceeds of true zeale; but to conclude y^e worst, ys y^e first degree of yll, ys a distillinge w^t too hot a fire. One of these occurrences, gaue the occasion to thys sermon, w^{ch} by Commandem^t I preachd, [and] w^{ch} I send yor Lp. Some few weeks after that, I preachd another at the same place: up^{on} y^e Gun-powder day. Therin I was left more to myne own liberty; and therfor I would I could ~~as~~ also send yor Lp a Copy of that; but that one, w^{ch}, also by commandement, ~~ye are~~ I did write after y^e preachinge, ys as yet in hys m^{ties} hand, ~~and~~ and, I know not whether he wyll in yt, as he did in y^e other, after hys readinge thereof, command yt to be printed; and, whilst yt ys in y^t suspense, I know yor Lp: would call yt Indiscretion, to send out any Copy therof; neyther truly, ame I able to committ that fault; for I haue no Copy. A few days after y^t, I preachd, by invitation of y^e Virginian Company, to an honorable auditory, and they recompencd me w^t a new commandemen^t, in theyr service, to printe that: and that, I hope, comes w^t thys: for, w^t papers of y^t kinde, I ame the apter to chardge yor cha[p-]leyne. In the Exercise of my Ministry, I haue assisted in y^e tyme of sicknes, and now attended at the funeralls, y^e first night of my Lady Jacob, and y^e next of S^r W^m. Killegrew: Against whom the B: of Exeter, my p^{r}decesser, here had commencd a suite in chancery, of (as he layd yt in hys byll, 30^{000l} in value. The case grew to a strange poynte. That w^{ch} was layd to him, was indirect dealing in ye execution of a Commission, about y^e value of y^t land, w^{ch} was taken from y^e Bishoprike. Hys sicknes made him unable to answere; w^{t}out y^t, they could not proceed. There was proposd a way, to appointe him a Guardian, Ad hoc. but the defect beeinge not in hys vnderstandinge, some of y^e Judges sayd, that if y^e case were treason, and he, by y^e hand of god, become vnable to answere he could not be proceeded against. whilst they were in farther deliberations, y^e good Man ys dead; and y^e chardge beeinge personall, [-f-] of w^{ch}, no other man can giue an account, I hope y^e whole busines ys dead to; though, if it be pursued I do not discern that they are in any danger. I recommend myselfe to yor Lps prayers; and I enwrap y^w, w^t myne own soule in myne: and or B: god, enwrap in y^e righteousnes of hys sonne, both y^u and

yor Lps humblest and thankfullest
seruant in chr: Jes:
J: DONNE

At my poore house at
S^t pauls, London. 1^o Decemb:
1622.

Source: Public Record Office, SP. 14/134/59

Other transcriptions: Domestic State Papers, James I, vol. CXXXIV,

No. 59

Gosse (II: 173-75)

Textual Notes

l. 7 "own" fits the sense and may be correct.

l. 9 [-] indicates two letters made unidentifiable by being crossed out. Donne obviously made a false start here, one of a number in this letter.

Commentary

In the State Papers of James I this letter appears addressed "To the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador for His Majesty of Great Britain to the Grand Seignor" (Gosse II: 172). Donne was a long-time acquaintance and friend of Sir Thomas Roe, who was an ambassador of James I to India and Constantinople (Bald, Life 159). Roe lived in the same lodgings as Donne between 1607 and 1611 at the house of a man named Tincomb in the Strand. Roe was a shareholder and a member of the Council of the Virginia Company which included other friends of Donne's (Bald, Life 162). He was probably the lover of Cecilia Bulstrode, a close friend of the Countess of Bedford's; the Countess, of course, was an important patron of Donne's. Roe was also a member of the 1614 parliament along with Donne and many of his friends (Bald, Life 286). Donne used Roe as an intermediary to approach the Countess of Bedford for money to pay his debts when he entered the church. Roe was a cousin of George Garrard, another friend of Donne's (Bald, Life 326). In this letter Donne consoles Roe for slanders he has suffered and gives news of his own career--especially the reception of three important sermons--and news of the death of two mutual friends. Donne was friendly with Sir Robert Killigrew, the son of Sir William Killigrew (Bald, Life 441-42), and obviously is inclined to side with the Killigrews in the lawsuit brought against them by his predecessor. In one of the sermons that Donne mentions, he defends the king against the charge of "tepidness in very high places," the popular view that the king had become too sympathetic toward Catholics because of his desire to marry Charles to a Spanish princess (for a full discussion see Bald, Life 432-33). Donne's views on the Spanish match appear to alter according to whom he writes. He writes to Buckingham (Beal No. 26) in a way that suggests that he likes everything Spanish, although Bald (Life 447) suggests that Donne is discreetly warning Buckingham of the dangers he will encounter in Spain.

1623

187

To the Most Honorable
and my most Honored L:
The Marquis of Buckingham.

Most honored L:
I can thus far make myselfe beleeve, that I ame where yor Lp ys, in spaine, that in my poore library, where indeed I ame, I can turne myne Ey towards no shelfe, in any profession, from the Mistresse of my youth, Poetry, to the wyfe of myne age, Diuinity, but that I meet more Autors of that Nation, then of any other. Theyr autors in Diuinity, though they do not show us the best way to heaven, yet they thinke they doe: And so, though they say not true, yet they do not ly, because they speake theyr Conscience. And since in charity, I beleeue so of them, for theyr Diuinity, In Ciuility I beleeue yt too, for Ciuill Matters, that therin also they meane as they say; and by thys tyme yor Lp: knowes what they say. I take therfore thys boldnes, to congratulate thus w^{t} yo^{r} Lp: y^{e} great honor w^{ch} yo^{w} receyue, in beeinge so great an instrument of y^{t} worke, in w^{ch} the peace of christendome so much consists. How to vse a sword, when yt ys out, we know yo^{w} know: Thinke yo^{w} that commandement of o^{r} Sauyours to be directed upon yo^{w}, Put up the sword; study the ways of peace. The hardest Autors in the world, are kings; And yo^{r} Lp. hath read ouer the hardest of ~~heauen~~ them. Since yo^{w} haue passd from y^{e} Text of the Kinge of kings, the booke of God, by the Commentary of the wisest kinge amongst Men, the Counsayls of our Soueraigne, the knowledge of other states, and other kings ys down-hill, and obuious to yo^{r} Lp: and yo^{w} finde yt in postinge. And for thys blessed clearnesse in yo^{r} Lp: allmighty god receyus every day, not the prayers (theyr tyme [ys] not, when the thinge ys giuen allready) but the thanks

yor Lps
humblest and deuoteds and
thankfullest
Servant in chr: Jes:

hath made
[?]auls, by
[?] [Pa]uls,
[1]623.

J: DONNE

Source: Bodleian, MS Tanner 83, f. 305 (Beal No. 26)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 176-77)

E. W. Sullivan II (125-26)

Transcription Notes

Donne's signature appears in the extreme bottom right-hand corner 1 cm. below the closing. The date and address given in the closing of the letter are partly torn away.

Commentary

This letter was written by Donne to Buckingham, who was in Spain with Prince Charles negotiating the Spanish match. Charles and Buckingham had travelled secretly to Spain, leaving 17 February, and were followed at the end of March by the Prince's entourage so that he could appear at Court in sufficient state. Charles returned to England on 5 October, without succeeding in negotiating the marriage (Bald, Life 446). The trip to Spain by Charles and Buckingham, along with James's concessions to the Catholics, caused widespread concern in England throughout 1623. Donne is, in this letter, according to Bald (Life 446-47),

> warning Buckingham against the Spaniards and urgently appealing to him not to be deceived by them. Yet he knew only too well the thick incense of flattery in which the favorite lived, and he knew the real danger of offending him by outspokenness. So he was forced to choose this devious means of expressing the concern which he and the majority of his fellow countrymen felt.

While Donne elsewhere expresses himself less favorably toward the Spanish match and the concessions to the English Catholics (see, for example, Beal No. 25 to Sir Thomas Roe), it is difficult to see how this letter could be seen by Buckingham as at all cautionary or anything but an endorsement of his and Charles's plan.

188

To S^r H.G. [Henry Goodyer]

SIR,

YOU husband my time thriftily, when you command me to write by such a messenger, as can tell you more then I can write, for so he doth not onely carry the Letter, but is the Letter. But that the naming of some things, may give you occasion to ask him farther, and him to open himself unto you, give me leave to tell you, that the now Spa. Embassadour proceeds in the old pace, the King hath departed from his ordinary way so farre, as to appoint 9 of the Councell to treat with him; but when they came to any approaches, he answered, that he brought onely Commission to propose certain things, which he was ready to doe, but he had no instructions to treat, but expected them upon an other return from his Master. So that there is no treaty for the marriage begun yet: for I know you have heard Olivarez his free acknowledgement, that til the Prince came, there was no thoght of it. The King in his gests of this progress, hath determined it, not as heretofore, at Windsor, but at Farnham during pleasure: so he is within a journey of Southampton; and even that circumstance addes to some other reasons, that he expects the Prince this Summer, and that Sir W. Crofts, in his last dispatches, enlarged the Prince in his liberty, from his Father, to come away, if he would. Amongst all the irregularities of this age, to me this is as strange as any, That this year there is no peace, and yet no sword drawn in the world; & it is a lost conjecture to think which way any of the Armies will bend. Here it is imagined, that Yukendorfe and Gabor (for, for any concurrence of love, it is but a dream) may so farre distresse Bohemia, as that Tilly must be recalled thither; and that if he be, Brunswikes way is open into Baviere, where he may recompense great losses, whilest Mansfield and Gonzales, and his Excellency and Spinola, keep the ballance even in their parts, by looking upon another. This noble friend of yours is in his last minute, in this Town; and I am going into the Coach with my Lo. to Hanworth. If I might have forborn the sealing the rest till my re-

turn from thence, you might have heard
something more from

Your very true poor friend and humble
servant in Chr. Jes. J. Donne.

No straitnesse makes me forget my service to
your daughters: If my Bell were tolling, I should
pray for them, and though my Letter be sealing,
I leave not out my wishes, that their fortunes
may second their goodnesse. Amen.

Source: *Letters* No. 29 (82-85)

Also in Gosse (II: 179-80)

Commentary

This letter can be dated by Donne's discussion of recent public events in England and on the Continent.

The events in England have to do with the negotiations for a Spanish match between Prince Charles and the King of Spain's daughter, the Infanta Maria. The Spanish Ambassador was Gondomar. "Olivarez" was Gaspar de Guzman Olivares, Count and Duke of San Lucar and the Spanish first minister. The events on the Continent refer to possible military actions, as war was anticipated. Gabor refers to Bethlen Gabor, the half-independent ruler of Transylvania who decided to try to become independent of both the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and the Sultan of Turkey by making himself master of the part of Hungary under Hapsburg rule. Tilly was a general of the Holy Roman Empire who might be recalled to Bohemia to protect against invasion by Gabor and Yukendorfe. If Tilly were recalled, the Protestant Duke of Brunswick would be able to invade the Catholic state of Bavaria (Baviere) and redress the Protestant losses while other military commanders maintained a standoff; Mansfield and His Excellency (the Elector of the Palatinate) were Protestant commanders, and Gonzales and Spinola were the commanders of the corresponding Catholic forces. See Letter No. 171.

Donne also informs Goodyer of his immediate departure with the Earl of Carlisle, James Hay, for Hay's residence at Hanworth.

Finally, the postscript of this letter contains a version of the famous imagery of the bells developed by Donne only three or four months later in the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* written in late November and early December 1623 (Raspa xiv). The imagery of the bells is introduced in the Meditation of the sixteenth Devotion and in the following three devotions, each of which deals with one of the three tolling bells in the Anglican service for the dying: the passing knell, the death knell, and the funeral knell. One of Donne's most famous passages, "never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*" (Raspa 87), occurs in the Meditation of the seventeenth devotion. Donne also uses the image of the tolling bells in "The Will" (ll. 1-2) (Raspa 172).

189

To the R. wor^{fll}:
S^{r} Nicolas Carey k^{t}
At Bedington.

S^{r}
I ame forc'd at thys tyme, to do a bolder thinge to-
wards y^{w}, then euer I shall againe. I was surprizd
at such a Necessity of vsinge a buck, as yt I tooke one
from S^{r} John Dauers, when he could hardly spare y^{t}.
and to repayre that, I ame constraynd to beg one of yo^{rs},
to pay that debt, w^{ch} did me so seasonable a kindnes.
If it be very inconvenient to y^{w}, I crave yo^{r} pardon for
askinge y^{t}: but if y^{t} disorder no purpose of yo^{rs} to giue
y^{t}, y^{w} haue yo^{r} Quietus Est, from me, for all my lyfe.
and, howsoever, duringe all y^{t} tyme, I shall recommend y^{w} and

all y^{or} family to o^{r} B: Savyer, in y^{e} best prayers, of
yr pur brother in law
and servant in chr: Jes:
J: DONNE

At S: pauls. 23 Julÿ
1624.

Source: CHPL MS 130, Pforzheimer Library, now at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin (Beal No. 27)

Transcript in The Carl H. Pforzheimer Library: English Literature, 1475-1700 (New York, 1940) III: 1255-56.

Transcription Notes

Heading S^{r} Nicolas Carey] Sir Nicolas Carew

1. 4 S^{r} John Dauers] Sir John Danvers

Commentary

Nicolas Carey [Carew] was Donne's brother-in-law, the husband of Mary, the eldest sister of Donne's wife Anne. Carew was originally Nicolas Throckmorton, but took the name Carew on succeeding to the estates of his uncle, Sir Francis Carew, in 1611. Sir John Danvers was the second husband of Lady Magdalen Herbert and thus stepfather of Sir Edward Herbert and George Herbert. Donne was friendly with the Herbert family before Lady Herbert's marriage to Sir John Danvers, and the friendship continued after the marriage. Sir John Danvers was later one of the regicides. Donne offers to repay the buck to Carew in a letter of 1 September 1624, having been given one by the Earl of Dorset.

A Letter from J.D. *to* Sr. Robert Carre *Knight, when he was in* Spain; *about severall matters*.

SIR,

YOur way into *Spain* was Eastward, and that is the way to the land of Perfumes and Spices; their way hither is Westward, and that is the way to the land of Gold, and of Mynes. The Wise men, who sought Christ, laid down both their Perfumes, and their Gold, at the feet of Christ, the Prince of Peace. If All confer all to his glory, and to the peace of his Church, *Amen*. But now I consider in Cosmography better; they and we differ not in East and West: we are much alike Easterlie. But yet, *Oriens nomen ejus*, the East is one of Christ's names, in one Prophet; And, *Filius Orientis est Lucifer*, the East is one of the Devill's names, in another: and these two differ diametrically. And so in things belonging to the worship of God, I think we shall, *Amen*. But the difference of our situation is in North and South; and you know, that though the labour of any ordinary Artificer in that Trade, will bring East and West together, (for if a flat Map be but pasted upon a round Globe, the farthest East, and the farthest West meet, and are all one) yet all this brings not North and South a scruple of a degree the nearer. There are things in which we may, and in that wherein we should not, my hope is in God, and in Him, in whom God doth so evidently work, we shall not meet, *Amen*. They have hotter daies in *Spain* than we have here, but our daies are longer; and yet we are hotter in our businesse here, and they longer about it there. God is sometimes called a Gyant, running a race; and sometimes is so slow-paced, as that a thousand years make but a day with God; and yet still the same God. He hath his purposes upon our noble and vehement affections, and upon their warie and sober discretions; and will use both to his glory. *Amen*.

Sir, I took up this Paper to write a Letter; but my imaginations were full of a

> Sermon before, for I write but a few hours before I am to Preach, and so instead of a Letter, I send you a Homily. Let it have thus much of a Letter, That I am confident in your love, and deliver my self over to your service. And thus much of a Homily, That you and I shall accompanie one another to the possession of Heaven, in the same way wherein God put us at first, *Amen*. *Your very humble and very thank-full servant in Christ, &c*.

Source: *T.M.C*. No. 170 (305)

Also in Gosse (II: 191)

Notes

l. 13 *Oriens nomen ejus*: The East is his name.

l. 15 *Filius Orientis est Lucifer* The son of the East is Lucifer.

Commentary

Gosse (II, 189) dates this letter and two others to Sir Robert Ker in February or March of 1624. Feil (343), however, dates the letter the summer of 1623, and Bald (*Life* 447) also suggests that date because of Donne's reference to the heat of the Spanish summer. Sir Robert Ker accompanied Prince Charles's household to Madrid during Prince Charles's and Buckingham's trip to Spain to attempt to secure the Spanish match. Prince Charles's entourage (including Ker) had been sent to Spain at the end of March 1623; the Prince returned to England 5 October (Bald, *Life* 445).

Bald regards this letter and another letter to Buckingham (Tanner MS. 83, Beal No. 26) as

> an example of the kind of indirection which Donne sometimes found it advisable to cultivate. He is warning Buckingham against the Spaniards and urgently appealing to him not to be

> deceived by them. . . . In his slightly later letter to Ker he is still devious, but his own opinions are more openly expressed. North and south can never meet, though (in the terms of one of Donne's favourite conceits) east and west may do so; England and Spain are north and south. 'They have hotter daies in Spain than we have here, but our daies are longer; yet we are hotter in our businesse here, and they are longer about it there.' The thought of midsummer days in Spain . . . suggests the contrast between the two national temperaments and allows Donne to express his impatience with Spanish prevarication. (Life 446-47)

Bald uses weaker evidence than he might here: Donne explicitly states to Ker that he hopes God will not work so that England and Spain meet: "There are things in which we [North and South] may, and in that wherein we should not [be brought nearer], my hope is in God, and in Him, in whom God doth so evidently work, we shall not meet, Amen."

J. R. Taylor (145-47) notes the political connections of the Countess of Bedford's circle which included Donne and many of his friends, including the Herberts, the Marquis of Hamilton, the Earl of Carlisle, Sir Henry Wotton, and Sir Henry Goodyer. This group was sympathetic to Princess Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, and as Taylor (150) points out: "Interest in the Queen of Bohemia's cause indicated opposition to the proposed Catholic marriages for Prince Charles, first Spanish then French, and defense of the Protestant succession which the Princess Elizabeth represented and ensured."

1624

191

To the Honourable Knight, Sir ROBERT KARRE.

Sir,

THough I have left my bed, I have not left my bed-side; I sit there still, and as a Prisoner discharged, sits at the Prison doore, to beg Fees, so sit I here, to gather crummes. I have used this leisure, to put the meditations had in my sicknesse, into some such order, as may minister some holy delight. They arise to so many sheetes (perchance 20.) as that without staying for that furniture of an Epistle, That my Friends importun'd me to Print them, I importune my Friends to receive them Printed. That, being in hand, through this long Trunke, that reaches from Saint *Pauls*, to Saint *James*, I whisper into your eare this question, whether there be any uncomlinesse, or unseasonablenesse, in presenting matter of Devotion, or Mortification, to that Prince, whom I pray God nothing may ever Mortifie, but Holinesse. If you allow my purposes in generall, I pray cast your eye upon the Title and the Epistle, and rectifie me in them: I submit substance, and circumstance to you, and the poore Author of both,

Your very humble and very thankfull
Servant
in Christ Jesus
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 90 (249-50)

Also in Gosse (II: 189-)

Notes

1. 14 St. Paul's: St. Paul's Cathedral, where Donne was Dean.

1. 15 Saint James: Saint James Palace, Prince Charles's residence.

Commentary

This letter written to Sir Robert Ker (later Earl of Ancrum) probably accompanied the printer's sheets of Donne's Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, written in late November and December 1623 and published by 1 February 1623/24 (Raspa, xvii). Donne asks Ker to read the Devotions and decide whether they are suitable to dedicate to Prince Charles. Donne also asks Ker to approve the dedicatory epistle to Charles, but whether Donne sent the epistle with the Devotions or wrote it later (as Raspa suggests) is not clear. Donne tells Ker early in this letter that his friends have seen the Devotions without an epistle, but his request that Ker "cast your eye upon the Title and the Epistle, and rectifie me in them" seems to suggest that Donne included the Epistle with the copy of the Devotions that he sent Ker.

192

Dr. Donne to the Duke.

My Honoured Lord,

ONce I adventured to say to the Prince his Highnesse, That I was sure he would receive a book from me, the more gratiously, because it was dedicated to your Grace: I proceed justlie upon the same confidence, that your grace will accept this, because it is his by the same title. If I had not overcome that reluctation, which I had in my self of representing devotions, and mortifications to a young and active Prince, I should not have put them into your presence, who have done so much, and have so much to do in this world, as that it might seem enough to think seriously of that. No man in the bodie of storie, is a full president to you, nor may any future man promise himself and adaequation to his precedent, if he make you, his. Kings have discerned the seeds of high virtues in many men, and upon that Gold, they have put their stamp, their favours upon those persons: But then those persons have laboured under the jealousie of the future Heire; And some few, have had the love of Prince, and King, but not of the Kingdom, and some of that too, and not of the Church; God hath united your Grace so to them all, that as you have received obligations from the King, and Prince, so you have laid obligations upon the Church and state. They above, love you out of their judgement, because they have loved you: and we below, love you out of our thankfulnesse, because you have loved us. Gods privie Seal is the testimonie of a good conscience, and his broad-Seal is the outward bessings of this life. But since his Pillar of fire, was seconded with a Pillar of Cloud, and that all his temporal blessings have some partial Eclipses, and the purest consciences some remorses: so though he have made your way to Glorie, Glorie; and brought you in the armes and bosome, of his Vicegerent, into his own arms and bosome, yet there must come a minute of twilight in a natural death. And as the reading of the actions of great men, may assist you for great actions, so for this one necessarie descent of dying, (which I hope shall be the onely step of Lownes, that ever you shall passe by, and by that late) you may receive some Remembrances, from the Meditations and Devotions of

Your Graces Devoutest Servant,
J. Donne.

Source: Cabala (315)

Also in Gosse (II: 207)

Collation

Title: Cabala Dr. Donne to the Duke. p. 315

T.M.C. A Letter from one to the Duke of Buckingham; upon presenting his Meditations to him. pp. 300-302

My Honoured Lord,] My most honoured Lord, T.M.C.

l. 1 Prince his Highnesse, at] Prince's Highness, that

l. 2 me,] me gratiously] graciouslie

l. 3 Grace:] Grace.

l. 4 accept this,] accept of this
because it is] because that it is

l. 6 self] self, representing devotions,] presenting Devotions
mortifications] Mortifications

l. 7 put] sent into] unto

l. 9 that] it man] man, bodie] body

l. 10 storie] Story you,] you;
nor may any future man promise] nor any of future may promise

l. 11	himself] himself, and adaequation] an adequation precedent] president you] You
l. 12	seeds] seed vertues] Vertue and] &
l. 13	Gold,] Gold put] set favours] favour persons:] persons;
l. 14	But] but those persons] these Persons jealousie] Jelousie
l. 15	Heire;] heir, And] & of Prince, and King,] of King and Prince,
l. 16	Kingdom,] Kingdome; and] but
l. 17	Church;] Church. united] raised
l. 18	King,] King
l. 19	Church and state] State, and Church
l. 20	judgement] judgment you:] you;
l. 21	thankfulnesse] fulnesse us. Gods] us; and God ever loved them, whom good men loved. God's
l. 22	privie Seal
l. 22	Seal] Seal, testimonie] Testimony conscience,] Conscience; broad-Seal] broad Seal
l. 23	bessings] Blessing life] world his] the Fire,] Fire
l. 24	and that all] and all temporal] temporall
l. 25	partial] partiall consciences] Conscience
l. 26	remorses] remorse so] so, have] hath Glorie, Glorie;] Glory, glory
l. 27	armes] arms bosome,] bosome Vicegerent] Vice-gerent
l. 28	bosome,] bosome;
ll. 28-29	yet then must come a minute of twilight in a natural death] yet then must we prise a minute of true light, in a naturall death
l. 29	great] Great

l. 30 assist] affect actions,] actions; one] our
descent] defect dying,] dying

l. 31 step of *Lownes*, that] only step that

l. 32 passe by, and by that late] passe to that, and by that Lake
Remembrances,] remembrances

l. 33 Meditations and Devotion] meditations, and devotions

Your Graces Devoutest Servant,] your Graces devoted
J. Donne.] servant, &c.

Textual Notes

The *T.M.C*. version of the letter alters the spelling and punctuation of the text in the *Cabala* and contains several obvious corruptions in the text. See especially ll. 28-29 and 32.

l. 11 adaequation: ae is written as a ligature.

Notes

l. 10 president] precedent

l. 11 adaequation] equation, equal

l. 22 Privie Seal: The seal affixed to documents that are afterwards to pass the Great Seal; also to documents of less importance which do not require the Great Seal.

Broad Seal: The Great Seal of England

ll. 23-24 Pillar of fire and Pillar of cloud: The fiery, cloudy pillar of God led the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt. Ex 13:21, 22, Ne 9:12.

l. 27 his Vicegerent [Viceregent]: God's vice-regent, King James

Commentary

The book enclosed with this letter to Buckingham was Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, written during his illness in late 1623-24. Copies of the Devotions were being printed by 1 February 1623/24. The book was dedicated to Prince Charles and Donne also sent a copy to Charles's sister, the Princess Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia. (See the following two letters.) The letter to Princess Elizabeth can be dated 1 February; this letter to Buckingham was probably written at the same time or perhaps slightly earlier.

Donne makes a noticeable effort in this letter to interest the Duke in the Devotions and to justify sending a meditation on suffering and dying to such a young and powerful man; when Donne writes to the Princess Elizabeth, he does not mention the contents of the Devotions.

193

A Letter from one, to the Queen of Bohemia; upon presentation of a Book of Meditations to her.

YOur Majesty hath had the patience heretofore to hear me deliver the messages of God to your self. In the hearing of me deliver my messages to God, I can hope for the continuance of your Majestie's patience. He is a very diffident man, that can doubt of that vertue in your Majestie; for of your great measure of that vertue, the World hath had more proofe than it needed. But I consider alwayes, that it had been in me a disloyall thing (I afford no milder a word to that fault) to have any way conjured to the exercising of your Majestie's patience; Therefore I have forborn, to thrust into your Majestie's presence my name, or any thing which hath proceeded from me, though alwayes the dignity

> of the subject, and sometimes the expresse commandment, sometimes the gracious alarum of your most royall Father, might have gon far in my excuse, in such a boldnesse to your Majestie. Now (for since I am doing a bold action, I may speak words that sound of boldnesse too) I surprise your Majestie, I take you at an advantage, I lay an obligation upon you, because that which your Brother's Highnesse hath received, your Majestie cannot refuse. By your own example you can suffer, by his example you may be pleased to accept this testimony of the zeal of your, &c.

Source: T.M.C. No. 162 (296)

Also in Gosse (II: 205)

Notes

Heading: A Book of Meditation; refers to Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, which was published 1 February 1623/24.

Commentary

This letter was enclosed in another to one of the ladies of Elizabeth's court when she was in exile in Holland as the Queen of Bohemia. The letter enclosing this one is dated, hence the dating of this letter. See Letter No. 194 immediately following this letter.

Donne's references to Elizabeth's patience and suffering arise from her exile in Holland and the recognition that her husband, Frederick, no longer had any hope of regaining his own title of Elector of the Palatinate, let alone the throne of Bohemia (Gosse II: 205).

194

[To a great lady in the suite of the
Queen of Bohemia]

Madam:

Except God had been pleased to let me into heaven to the gates whereof, by this sickness, he brought me I could not be possessed of better Society, nor better frinds, then he hath offered me in this world. of them yo^{r} Lap: hath been contente to be: And of that noble frindship: This is the present exercise, that you would receive this booke from me; And if vpon conference wth yo^{r} noble husband (whose hands I kisse) it appeare not an overbouldness in me to proceede soe, I beseech you to present the other booke, and the Letter to her Ma^{tie}: who is ever ioyned by me, wth my owne soul in all the prayers of

Yo^{r} Lapps:
very humble servant in Chr: Jes:
JO: DONNE:

At S^{t} Pauls house
1^{o} February:

Source: St. Paul's Cathedral (Anderdon MSS.)

Also in Gosse (II: 206)

Textual Notes

This is one of the letters from the "Anderdon MSS," as Gosse describes them. They are copies of five of Donne's letters on two folio leaves originally conjoined. One leaf of this MS formerly owned by Miss Mary Donne of Chester is now at St. Paul's Cathedral (Donne file in safe) (Beal, 244). The letters on this sheet are Gosse I: 109; II: 16; and II: 206. The other leaf, in the collection of Roger Barrett of Chicago, contains Gosse I: 309 and II: 33. See the Textual Introduction for more information.

Closing The address and date are written in the left margin:

At S^{t} Pauls house

1^{o} Febru ary

Commentary

This letter was apparently written to a lady in the suite of the Queen of Bohemia enclosing the preceding letter (193) to the Queen of Bohemia and a copy of His Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions to present to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, on his behalf. See also the Commentary for Letter No. 193.

195

A Letter from the same Person to a Lord, upon presenting of some of his work to him. [To the Earl of Dorset?]

My Lord,

TO make my self believe that our life is something, I use in my thoughts to compare it to something, if it be like any thing that is something. It is like a Sentence, so much as may be uttered in a breathing: and such a difference as is in Styles, is in our lives, contracted and dilated. And as in some Styles, there are open Parenthese, Sentences within Sentences; so there are lives, within our lives. I am in such a Parenthesis now, in a convalescence, when I thought my self verie near my period. God brought me into a low valley, and from thence shewed me high Jerusalem, upon so high a hill, as that he thought it fit to bid me stay, and gather more breath. This I do, by meditating, by expostulating, by praying; for, since I am barred of my ordinarie diet, which is Reading, I make these my exercises, which is another part of Physick. And these meditations, and expostulations, and prayers, I am bold to send to your Lordship; that, as this which I live now is a kind of a second life, I may deliver my self over to your Lordship in this life, with the same affection and devotion, as made me yours in all my former life; and as long as any image of this world sticks in my soul, shall ever remain in your Lordships, &c.

Source: *T.M.C*. No. 167 (302)

Also in Gosse (II: 208)

Commentary

The letter indicates that it accompanied a presentation copy of Donne's *Devotions*, of which the first copies were printed on 1 February 1623/4. Gosse (II: 208) suggests that the letter was written to the Earl of Dorset, although he gives no reason for his conjecture. This letter was one of those added to the *Sir Tobie Mathews Collection* by Donne's son from those in his own possession.

Donne uses two conceits in this letter that occur elsewhere in his work: he equates change with "new lives"; he allegorically describes the physical journey to reach heaven ("high Jerusalem").

196

To the R: wor^{pll}: S^{r} Nicolas Carey k^{t}, at Bedington

S^{r}.
It must aways be my first worke, to present to yo^{w} my
thanks for yo^{r} fauors of all kinds, and to accompany my
poore thanks, w^{t} my best prayers for yo^{r} happines, in
yo^{r} Selfe, and all yo^{r} family. Amen. Besides, I haue
at thys tyme, an occasion of doinge my L: of Dorset a
Seruice, in dischardginge a commandement of hys. He
remembers himselfe to be in yo^{r} debt, for a free curtesy
that y^{w} did him out of yo^{r} parke, and her he reserues
a ftagge for y^{w}, in returne of y^{t} fauor. He expects
from me (for I haue vndertaken to tell him) at what
tyme yt may be most acceptable to y^{w}. Vpon Saterday
we make account to go to knolle together. If before
that, or at any tyme, y^{w} wyll be pleasd to let me know,

what day y^{w} wyll command yt to be sent, yt shallbe.
So, S^{r}, I rest

yor poore frinde and
Servant in Chr: Jes:
J: Donne:

At my house at S: pauls
1^{o} Sept: 1624.

Source: British Library Additional MS 29598, f. 13.

Facsimile in W. W. Greg's English Literary Autographs, plate XLVIII from British Museum Addit. MS 29598, fol. 13

(Beal No. 28)

Other transcriptions: Greg (accompanying plate XLVIII)

Gosse (II: 209)

Transcription Notes

The address of the letter is taken from the notes accompanying Greg's facsimile and transcription, but does not appear in Donne's hand in either the microfilm of the holograph made by the British Library or Greg's facsimile.

Commentary

Nicolas Carey [Carew] was Donne's brother-in-law whose name was originally Nicholas Throckmorton, but who took the name Carew on succeeding to the estates of his uncle, Sir Francis Carew, son of the Sir Nicholas Carew, K.G., executed in 1539. The Earl of Dorset mentioned was Edward Sackville, the fourth Earl, who had succeeded his brother Richard the previous May. Knole was the family seat near Sevenoaks, which had been granted to his grandfather Thomas Sackville by Elizabeth. Sackville was made Baron Buckhurst by Elizabeth and the first Earl of Dorset by James. Sevenoaks was one of Donne's two country parishes, and was granted to him by Donne's old employer, the Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Egerton. This letter is one of several surviving letters which Donne writes concerning the borrowing and repaying of bucks, which were needed for feeding special guests. See also Letter No. 202.

197

[This text, taken from the Letters, is immediately followed by a transcription which begins at l. 53. The transcription is the more accurate text, but because it is a fragment, it follows this complete version. For the same reason, the collation uses this text as its base.]

To the Honourable L. the Lady Kingsmel upon the death of her Husband.

MADAME,

THose things which God dissolves at once, as he shall do the Sun, and Moon, and those bodies at the last conflagration, he never intends to reunite again; but in those things, which he takes in pieces, as he doth man, and wife, in these divorces, by death, and in single persons, by the divorce of body and soul, God hath another purpose to make them up again. That piece which he takes to himself, is presently cast in a mould, and in an instant made fit for his use; for heaven is not a place of a proficiency, but of present perfection. That piece which he leaves behinde in this world, by the death of a part thereof, growes fitter and fitter for him, by the good use of his corrections, and the intire conformity to his will. Nothing disproportions us, nor makes us so uncapable of being reunited to those whom we loved here, as murmuring, or not advancing the goodness of him, who hath removed them from hence. We would wonder, to see a man, who in a wood were left to his liberty, to fell what trees he would, take onely the crooked, and leave the streightest trees; but that man hath perchance a ship to build, and not a house, and so hath use of that kinde of timber: let not us, who know that in Gods house there are many Mansions, but yet have no modell, no designe of the forme of that building, wonder at his taking in of his materialls, why he takes the young, and leaves the old, or why the sickly overlive those, that had better health. We are not bound to think that souls departed, have devested all affections towards them, whom they left here; but we are bound to think, that for all their loves they would not be here again: Then is the will of God done in Earth, as it is in Heaven, when we neither pretermit his actions, nor resist them; neither pass them over in an inconsideration, as though God had no hand in them, nor go about to take them out of his hands, as though we could direct him to do them better. As Gods Scriptures are his will, so his actions are his will; both are Testaments, because they testifie his minde to us. It is not lawfull to adde a scedule to either of his wills: as they do ill, who adde to his written will, the Scriptures, a scedule of Apcryphall books: so do they also, who to his other will, his manifested actions, adde Apocryphall conditions, and a scedule of such limitations as these, If God would have stayed thus long, or, If God would have proceeded in this or this manner, I could have born it. To say that our afflictions are greater then we can bear, is so near to despairing, as that the same words express both; for when we consider Caines words in that originall tongue in which God spake, we cannot tell whether the words be, My punishment is greater then can be born; or, My sin is greater then can be forgiven. But Madame, you who willingly sacrificed your self to God, in your obedience to him, in your own sickness, cannot be doubted to dispute with him, about any part of you, which he shall be pleased to require at your hands. The difference is great in the loss, of an arme, or a head; of a child, or a husband: but to them, who are incorporated into Christ, their head, there can be no beheading; upon you, who are a member of the spouse of Christ the Church, there can fall no widowhead, nor orphanage upon those children, to whom God is father. I have not another office by your husbands death; for I was your Chaplaine before, in my daily prayers; but I shall inlarge that office with other Collects, then before, that God will continue to you, that peace which you have ever had in him, and send you quiet, and peaceable dispositions in all them with whom you shall have any thing to do, in your temporall estate and matters of this world. *Amen*.

At my poor house at S.
Pauls. 26. *Octob*.
1624.

Your Ladiships very humble and
thankfull servant in Christ
Jesus J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 5 (7-10)

Transcription of the last half (approximately) of the holograph that appears in facsimile in Maggs Bros. Catalogue (the location of original MS. is not known):

dule of Apocryphall books, so do they also, who to hys other wyll, hys manifested Actions add Apocryphall conditions and a scedule of such limitations, If god would haue stayd thus longe, or if god would haue proceeded in thys, or thys Manner, I could haue borne it To say, that our afflictions are greater then we can bear ys so near to despairinge, as that the same words expresse both; for when we consider Cains words in that Originall tongue, in w^{ch} god spoke, we cannot tell, whether the words be, My punishment ys, more then can be borne or My Sinne ys greater then can be forgiuen. But Madam, yo^{w} who willinglly sacrific'd yorselfe to god in yo^{r} obedience to him, in yo^{r} own sicknes, cannot be doubted to dis put w^{t} him about any part of yo^{w}, w^{ch} he shall be pleasd to require at yor hands. The difference ys great, in the losse of an arme, or a Head; of a child, or a Husband: But to them who are incorporated into Christ, theyr Head, ther can be no beheadinge; upon y^{ow}, She who are a Member of the spouse of christ, the churche, there can fall no wydowhood, nor Or= phanage upon those children, to whom god ys father. I haue not another office, by yor husbands Death; for I was yo^{r} Chapleyne before, in my dayly prayers; but I shall enlardge that office w^{t} other Collects, then before, That god wyll continue to yo^{w} that peace w^{ch} yo^{w} haue euer had in him and send y^{ow} quiet and peacable dispositions in all them, w^{t} whom y^{ow} shall haue any thinge to doe in yo^{r} temperall estate, and matters of thys world. Amen..

yr Lads.
very humble and thankfull
seruant in chr: Jes:
J: DONNE &.

At my poore house at S: pauls
26 Oct: 1624..

MS unlocated; sold by Maggs, Catalogue No. 730 (1943), item 318

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 210-12)

Facsimiles of the last thirty-six lines of the holograph occur in Maggs Catalogues Nos. 597 (1934), item 353, 600 (1934), item 93; and 611 (1935), item 614. A request to Maggs received no answer, but the Maggs Catalogues are available from the British Library.

Collation

Letters, 1651-54,

Walton, 1658,

T.M.C., 1660,

Title:	*To the Honourable L. the Lady* Kingsmel *upon the death of her Husband*.	*Letters* pp. 7-10
	To the Hon^{ble} Lady, the Lady Kingsmel, *upon the death of her Husband*.	Walton, pp. 141-45
	Doctor Dunne writes Consolatorily to a Lady, upon the Death of her Husband.	*T.M.C*., pp. 106-08

MADAME,] Madam, *T.M.C*.

l. 1 things] things, *T.M.C*.

l. 2 do] doe Walton Sun,] Sun Walton

l. 3 bodies] Bodies, *T.M.C*. conflagration

ll. 3-4 conflagration,] Conflagration,

l. 4 reunite again;] re-unite again; Walton re-unite; *T.M.C*.

l. 6 pieces,] pieces (*T.M.C*. man,] man Walton Man *T.M.C*. wife,] wife Walton Wife, *T.M.C*.

l. 7 death,] death; *T.M.C*.

l. 8 by] in *T.M.C*. body] Bodie, *T.M.C*. soul,] Soul) *T.M.C*.

l. 9	purpose] purpose, T.M.C. up] up, T.M.C.
l. 10	piece] peice Walton peece, T.M.C.
ll. 10-11	is presently cast in] is cast into T.M.C.
l. 11	instant] instant, T.M.C.
l. 12	for heaven] For Heaven T.M.C.
l. 13	proficiency] proficiencie T.M.C.
l. 14	perfection.] perfection; T.M.C. piece] peece, T.M.C. behinde] behind T.M.C.
l. 15	world] World
l. 16	growes] grows Walton
l. 20	reunited] re-united T.M.C. those] those, T.M.C. here,] here Walton
ll. 21-22	good-nesse] goodness Walton T.M.C. him,] him Walton
l. 23	wonder,] wonder Walton T.M.C.
l. 24	who] who, T.M.C. wood] Wood, T.M.C. liberty,] liberty Walton libertie, T.M.C.
l. 25	fell] fel Walton trees] Trees T.M.C.
l. 26	crooked,] crooked Walton streightest] straightest Walton trees] Trees T.M.C.
l. 27	that man] yet that man T.M.C. hath perchance] hath, perhaps T.M.C. ship] T.M.C.
l. 28	house] House T.M.C.
l. 29	kinde] kind Walton T.M.C. timber:] Timber. T.M.C. let] Let T.M.C. know] know, T.M.C.
l. 30	many] manie T.M.C.
ll. 30-31	Mansions] mansions Walton
l. 31	no modell, no designe] no modell nor designe T.M.C.
l. 32	the forme of that building] the form of that building Walton that building T.M.C.
l. 33	in of his materialls] in his Materialls T.M.C.

l. 34	old,] old; T.M.C. or] or, T.M.C.
l. 35	sickly] sicklie T.M.C. overlive] over-live Walton T.M.C. those, that had better health.] them who had better health. T.M.C.
l. 36	think] think, Walton T.M.C. souls] soules Walton Souls T.M.C.
l. 37	departed] departed, Walton T.M.C. devested] divested T.M.C.
l. 38	them,] them Walton
l. 39	think,] thinke loves they] love to us, they T.M.C.
l. 40	Then] then Walton will] will T.M.C.
l. 41	of God done in Earth, as it is in Heaven] of God done in earth as it is in heaven Walton of God done in Earth as it is in Heaven T.M.C.
l. 43	them;] them, T.M.C. neither pass] nor yet passe T.M.C.
l. 45	in them,] in them; Walton therein; T.M.C.
l. 47	him] Him T.M.C. *Lines 47-59 from "As Gods Scriptures" to "To say" are omitted in T.M.C.
l. 49	Testaments] testaments Walton
l. 50	minde] mind Walton lawfull] lawful Walton
l. 51	scedule] Schedule Walton
l. 53	scedule] Schedule Walton Apcryphall] Apocryphall MS. books:] books, MS. books; Walton
l. 55	actions,] Actions MS. adde] add MS.
ll. 55-56	condi/tions,] conditions MS.
l. 56	scedule] scedule, MS.
ll. 56-57	limitations as these, If] limitations, If MS.
l. 57	God] god MS. have] haue MS. stayed] stayd MS. staid long,] longe, MS.
l. 58	or,] or MS. Walton If] if MS. Walton God] god MS. have] haue MS. this] thys, MS.

l. 59 this] thys MS. manner,] Manner MS. have] haue MS.
born] borne MS. Walton it.] it MS.

l. 60 say] say, MS. *T.M.C*. then] than *T.M.C*.

l. 61 bear, is] bear ys MS. near] neer Walton
despairing] despairinge MS. dispairing *T.M.C*.

l. 62 express] expresse MS. *T.M.C*. both; for] both. For *T.M.C*.

l. 63 *Caines*] Cains MS. *Cains* Walton Cain's] *T.M.C*.
originall] Originall MS. *T.M.C*.

l. 64 tongue] tongue, MS. Tongue Walton *T.M.C*.
which] w^{ch} MS. God] god MS. spake] spoke MS. *T.M.C*.
tell] tell, MS.

l. 65 My punishment is] My punishment ys, MS.
My punishment is Walton *T.M.C*.

l. 66 greater then can be born; or, My sin is greater] more then can be borne or My Sinne ys greater MS.
greater then can be borne, or, *My sin is greater* Walton
greater than can be born; or, *My sin is greater* *T.M.C*.

l. 67 then can be forgiven] then can be forgiuen MS.
then can be forgiven Walton *T.M.C*.
But Madame, you] But Madam, yo^{w} MS. But, Madam, you Walton
But, *Madam*, you, *T.M.C*.

l. 68 willingly] willinglly MS. willinglie *T.M.C*.
sacrificed] sacrific'd MS. your self] yorselfe MS.
God,] god MS.

l. 69 your] yo^{r} MS.

l. 70 sickness] sicknes MS. sicknesse *T.M.C*.
dispute] disput MS. with] w^{t} MS.

l. 71 him,] him MS. Walton any] anie *T.M.C*. you] yo^{w} MS.
which] w^{ch} MS.

l. 72 pleased] pleasd MS. your] yor MS.

l. 73 is] ys MS. great] great, MS. *T.M.C*.
loss,] losse MS. Walton

l. 74 head] Head MS. *T.M.C*. child] Child *T.M.C*.
husband: but to] Husband: But to MS.
Husband: but yet to *T.M.C*. them,] them MS. Walton

l. 75 Christ,] Christ Walton their] theyr MS.

l. 76 head] Head MS. *T.M.C*. there] ther MS.
beheading; upon] beheadinge; upon MS.
beheading. Upon *T.M.C*.

l. 77 you,] y^{ow}, MS. you Walton member] Member MS. *T.M.C*.
spouse] Spouse Walton *T.M.C*.

l. 78 Christ] christ, MS. Christ, *T.M.C*.
Church] churche, MS. fall] fal Walton

ll. 78-79 widowhead,] wydowhood, MS. widow-head Walton
widow-hood; *T.M.C*.

l. 79 orphanage] Orphanage MS. *T.M.C*.

l. 80 children,] children Walton Children *T.M.C*.
God] god MS. is] ys MS. father] Father *T.M.C*.

l. 81 office] office, MS. Office *T.M.C*. your] yor MS.
husbands] Husband's Walton *T.M.C*. death;] Death; MS.
death, Walton *T.M.C*.

l. 82 your] yo^{r} MS. Chaplaine] Chapleyne MS.
Chaplain Walton *T.M.C*. before,] before Walton

l. 83 daily] dayly MS. Walton dailie *T.M.C*.
prayers] Praiers *T.M.C*. inlarge] enlardge MS.
enlarge *T.M.C*. office] Office *T.M.C*.

l. 84 with] w^{t} MS. Collects,] Collects Walton
then] than Walton *T.M.C*. before,] before: *T.M.C*.
that] That MS. *T.M.C*. God] god MS.

l. 85 will] wyll MS. you,] yo^{w} MS. you Walton
peace] peace, *T.M.C*. which] w^{ch} MS. you] yo^{w} MS.

l. 86 have] haue MS. ever] euer him,] him MS.
him; *T.M.C*. you] y^{ow} MS.
quiet,] quiet MS. Walton *T.M.C*.

l. 87 them] them, MS. *T.M.C*. with] w^{t} MS.

l. 88 you] y^{ow} MS. have] haue MS. thing] thinge MS.
do] doe MS.

l. 89 your] yo^{r} MS. temporall] temperall MS.
estate] estate, MS. Estate, *T.M.C*. this] thys MS.
Amen.] Amen.. MS. Your Ladiships] yr. Lads. MS.
servant] seruant MS. Servant Walton
Christ] Chr: MS. Chr. Walton
Jesus,] Jes: MS. *Jesus*, Walton
J. Donne.] J: DONNE &. MS. poor] poore MS.
S. Pauls.] S: pauls MS.

26. Octob.] 26 Oct: 1624.. MS.
1624]

The entire closing is omitted in T.M.C.

Textual Notes

This fragment is the single most important text of all of Donne's holographs. It is the only holograph which is printed in the Letters, Walton's Life of Donne, and the Tobie Mathews Collection. Thus it provides the only opportunity to judge the relative accuracy of the three texts. The collation tends to confirm the view that the Letters provides the most accurate text, not because there are fewer variants, but because no portions of the text are omitted. The collation also suggests that Walton and T.M.C. used the Letters when compiling their texts, although it also appears that both Walton and Donne's son had access to a manuscript.

There are approximately one hundred differences between the last thirty-six lines of this letter as printed in the Letters and the corresponding portion of the holograph as reproduced in the Maggs Bros. Catalogue. The number must be considered approximate because the facsimile may obscure or distort some characters. In addition, some phrases are collated for clarity and more than one individual variant may be included. Of the one hundred variants, only two have any claim to being substantive. The first occurs in lines 156-57 of the text from the Letters. The explanatory phrase "as these" is added to clarify the phrase "such limitations" (this change occurs in all printed versions). The second substantive change occurs in lines 66-67 from the Letters. "My punishment is greater then can be borne" replaces the reading in the holograph, "My punishment ys, more then can be borne." The printed version was presumably altered to emphasize the parallel structure with the phrase that immediately follows: "or My Sinne is greater then can be forgiuen." The repetition of these changes in both Walton and *T.M.C*. suggests that they relied, at least to some extent, on the text of the *Letters*. The other differences are in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, and are largely due to the difference between printing practices and handwriting. The printed text tends to increase punctuation, reduce Donne's use of capitals for emphasis, modernize the spelling, and write all abbreviations (which for w^{ch}, with for w^{t}, etc.). The collation suggests that (by seventeenth-century standards) the 1651 text was intended to be an accurate one.

Comparing the other variants that occur among the various printed texts and the MS. suggests that the MS. was available to the editors for all three printed texts. This assertion is based on the number of times each printed text agrees with the MS. against the other printed texts. The MS. and Walton agree against the *Letters* on nine occasions. The MS. and *T.M.C*. agree against the *Letters* on twelve occasions. The *Letters* agree with the MS. against Walton on ten occasions. The *Letters* agree with the MS. against *T.M.C*. on twelve different occasions, in addition to the *T.M.C*. texts lacking lines 47-59 of the *Letters* as well as the entire closing of the *Letters* and MS.

Walton's agreement with the MS. against the *Letters* includes five commas added to the *Letters*, one capital added in the *Letters*, and three modernized spellings in the *Letters* (loss for losse, born for borne, and daily for dayly). The *T.M.C*. agreement with the MS. against the *Letters* includes three commas added to the Letters, six capitals deleted from the MS. in the Letters, and three modernized spellings in the Letters.

The collation reinforces what most editors of Donne believe: that the text of the 1651 Letters is the most reliable of the seventeenth-century printed versions. While the number of variants from the MS. are approximately the same for each printed text, the texts of the Letters is superior because both Walton and T.M.C. can be shown to omit extensive passages on occasion. Moreover, while the number of differences between the MS. and the letter appears to be large (approximately three per line, or one hundred in thirty-six lines), most of them occur because of the change in practises from handwriting to print.

Commentary

See Letter No. 1 to Bridget White for her acquaintanceship with Donne. This letter, as the title indicates, was written to console Lady Kingsmill on the death of her husband, Henry. Part of Donne's discussion of Lady Kingsmill's role on earth after her husband's death is reminiscent of his verse letter to the Countess of Bedford, "You that are shee and you." Both ladies are made fitter for Heaven by the death of someone close to them. In the Countess of Bedford's letter, all of Lady Markham's virtues, which had been infused by the Countess, are now contracted back into the Countess; in Lady Kingsmill's case, the death of a loved one is God's corrective to turn her attention to him. Despite the more orthodox treatment of virtue in the prose letter, Donne's earlier style of wit remains in his word play with the word "head," using it in both the literal and figurative senses to connect the head as a mortal part of the body with immortality through Christ as the head of the church. Beheading (death, mortality) and "widowheads" (separation from a spouse; loneliness) do not exist for those "to whom God is father."

198

[To Sir Edward Conway]

May it please yo^{r} Honor

I recyud by the hands of M^{r} Woodford, a letter, from o^{r} most gracious Master, to myselfe and the other Residentiaries of our churche, recommendinge vnto vs M^{r} Smith, to succeed M^{r} Woodford in S^{t} fayths Churche. Though it be thus much to yo^{r} Honors trouble, yt becomes me to giue an account therof. That churche ys, at thys auoydance, accordinge to our courses, in my particular gift; as allso yt fell out to be so, when M^{r} Woodford recyud yt at my hands: And upon iust confidence in that title, I had giuen the next presentation thereof, (before any intimation, or imagination of hys m^{ties} pleasure) to a person that hath deserued a greater seruice from me. So that, to make myselfe able, to do that w^{ch} ys allways intirely my desire, to serue his M^{tie}, I was put, first to worke the Chapter, and then to recall my graunt, and after to wayue my course and turne of presentinge. All w^{ch} beinge wth the speediest diligence that I could use, and the very ready forwardnesse of o^{r} whole Chapter, accomplishd, and therby the way made certaine and-- plaine, for Mr. Smith to enter ther upon, as soone as yt shalbe made uoyde, I thought it necessary to signify so much to yo^{r} Honor; not that these Circumstances of difficulty adde any--thinge to my Meritt, but that yt adds to my gladnesse, that in one businesse, I had so many occasions to testify my desire to serue hys ^{mtie}, from whom I haue, not onely (as other men haue) receyud my lyuelyhood, but my priesthood. To w^{ch} Joye of myne, I humbly beseeche yor Honor, that I may haue leaue to adde thys other, that yo^{w} wyll be pleasd to returne [--] [to] yor knowledge, and retaine in yor fauor

yor Honors
Humblest Servant in Chr: Jes:
J: DONNE.

At my poor house at pauls
7^{o} Decemb: i624

Source: Public Record Office, SP. 14/176/28 (Beal No. 31)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 213-14)

Transcription Notes

to
1. 26 [--]: to appears above two illegible letters that Donne has crossed out.

Commentary

Donne is writing to Sir Edward Conway, who was secretary of state at this time. Conway was an acquaintance and possibly a friend of Donne's whom Donne had probably known since Essex's expedition to Cadiz in 1597, in which both men participated. This letter deals with Church business. (See Bald, *Life* 393-94, for a complete discussion.) The living at St. Faith's Church, a church within the jurisdiction of St. Pauls, was in the hands of the Dean and chapter. Such livings were nominated by each of the four residentaries (canons which included the Dean and three of the more important officers of the diocese). In this case, Donne had the appointment and appointed William Woodford. Woodford had been Doncaster's chaplain in 1619, but had remained with Lady Doncaster and the children during Doncaster's embassy, while Donne travelled abroad as Doncaster's chaplain. Doncaster may have influenced the appointment which occurred 26 March 1624. Woodford held the rectory for less than a year before receiving a promotion by King James to the living of Upton-on-Severn in Worcestershire. James required the appointment of Emmanuel Smith to succeed Woodford at St. Faith's. As these positions were promised before they came open, the King's intervention forced Donne to go back on his word. While the wishes of the King were complied with, Donne points out the inconvenience they have caused. Emmanuel Smith was appointed to another, better living within a month and the dean and chapter appointed a Scot, John Lesley, who later became Bishop of Sodor and Man (Bald, *Life* 393).

1625

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[To Sir Robert Ker]

SIR,
I Presume you rather try what you can doe in me, then what
I can doe in verse, you know my uttermost when it was
best, and even then I did best when I had least truth for my
subjects, In this present case there is so much truth as it defeats
all Poetry. Call therefore this paper by what name you
will, and, if it bee not worthy of you nor of him, we will smother
it, and be it your sacrifice. If you had commanded mee
to have waited on his body to Scotland and preached there, I
would have embraced your obligation with much alacrity;
But, I thanke you that you would command me that which I
was loather to doe, for, even that hath given a tincture of
merit to the obedience of

Your poore friend and
servant in Christ Jesus

I.D.

Source: *Poems 1633* (148 [sic], 164)

Collation

The collation includes Grierson's collation of *A18* and *TCC*, which is selective, and my complete collation of O'F.

Title: Untitled
(The letter follows "An hymne to the Saints, and to Marquesse Hamylton") — 1633 (p. 148 [sic], 164); *A18*, *TCC* Grierson I: 288

To S^{r} Robert Carr
(The letter precedes "An hymne to the Saints, and to Marquesse Hamylton") — *O'F* p. 181

To Sir Robert Carr
(The letter and its title are incorporated between the title and the body of "An hymne to the Saints, and to Marquesse Hamylton") — 1635, 39 p. 349; 1649, 50, 54 p. 331; 1669 p. 326

SIR, (above the line)] S^{r} (in the first line of the body)

l. 1 Presume] p^{r}sume O'F you] yo^{u} O'F try] trye O'F
you] yo^{u} O'F me,] mee O'F than] then O'F

l. 2 verse,] verse. O'F verse; 1635-69
uttermost] vttermost O'F

ll. 2-3 at best, and] at best. And O'F 1635-69
at the best A18 TCC

l. 3 truth] Truth O'F

l. 4 subjects,] subiect O'F subject, A18 TCC
subjects. 1635-69 truth] Truth O'F

l. 5 Poetry] poetry O'F paper] Paper O'F you] yo^{u} O'F

l. 6 and,] and O'F

ll. 6-7 worthy of you nor of him, we will smother it, and be it your sacrifice.] worthy of him, nor of yo^{u} nor of mee, smother it, and bee that the Sacrifice. O'F worthy of him, nor of you, nor of anye; smother it, and bee that the sacrifice. A18 TCC worthy of him, nor of you, nor of me, smother it, and bee that the sacrifice. 1635-69

l. 7 you] yo^{u} O'F commanded] commanded O'F

l. 8 have] haue O'F waited] wayted O'F on] vpon O'F
Scotland] Scotland, O'F

l. 9 would] should O'F have] haue O'F
embraced] imbraced 1649-69
your obligation] the Obligacion O'F
the obligation A18 TCC 1635-69
much alacrity;] more Alacrity. O'F
more alacritie, 1635-39 more alacrity; 1649-69

l. 10 But,] But O'F command me that] command that O'F
which] w^{ch} O'F

l. 11 loather] loth O'F loath A18 TCC 1635-69
doe, for,] doe. For O'F doe for 1639
doe, For 1649, 50, 54 do, for 1669 tincture] Tincture

Your poore friend and servant in Christ Jesus.] Yo^{r} poore frind and S^{e}vant O'F

I.D.] Jo: Donne. O'F

Textual Notes

Because this letter accompanied the funeral poem "An hymne to the Saints, and to Marquesse Hamylton," it was included with the poem in the following manuscripts:

TCC (Trinity College Cambridge)

A18 (Additional MS. 18646, Br. Museum, believed to be a copy of TCC)

TCD (Trinity College Dublin)

Lut (Lutrell), O'F (O'Flahertie, believed to be a copy of Lutrell)

TCC, A18, and TCD are classified by Milgate as "Group II MSS."

Lut and O'F are classified by Milgate as "Group III MSS."

The letter also appears in the following Miscellanies:

P.R.O., S.P. 9/51/17

Bodleian MS. Rawl. Poet. 26.

In A18 and TCC and in 1633 the letter is not addressed. In O'F the letter is addressed "To S^r Robert Carr." In TCD it is headed 'The Letter that was sent with these verses.' In Lib MS. Rawl. Poet. 116 the letter appears without the poem, entitled 'A friend of Dr. Dun desird him to make a paper of verses on the death of the marquese of Hambleton w^{ch} he did and wth it wrote thus. "S^r / I presume . . . ."' Milgate's texts of the letter, like Grierson's, is based on 1633 and is emended from the MSS. and from the later editions (1635-69). Milgate does not collate his text of the letter. However, he indicates that there is only one difference from Grierson's text. In line 4 Milgate adopts the reading of all the MSS.: "subject" instead of "subjects." Grierson's textual theory supports 1633 against readings which appear in

> a single manuscript or in the later editions of the poems when those editions do not have the support of the manuscripts. Grierson would, however, favour the readings which appear in

the manuscripts (A18 and TCC in this case) when they confirm the readings of the later editions. Thus, in line 9, for example, Grierson accepts "the obligation" (A18, TCC, 1635-69) over "your obligation" (1633). Milgate adopts the same reading. Similarly in ll. 6-7 Milgate follows Grierson in adopting the reading of 1635-69 against 1633. In this case, A18 and TCC agree and O'F has a very similar text to those two MSS. The reading these MSS. share is much closer to the editions of 1635-69 than to 1633; hence Grierson feels free to emend against 1633.

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To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

SIR,

THis morning I have received a signification from my Lord Chamberlaine, that his Majesty hath commanded to morrows Sermon at S. James; And that it is in the after-noon; (for, into my mouth there must not enter the word, after-dinner, because that day there enters no dinner into my mouth.) Towards the time of the service, I aske your leave, that I may hide my selfe in your out-chamber. Or if businesse, or privatenesse, or company make that inconvenient, that you will be pleased to assigne some servant of yours to shew me the Closet, when I come to your chamber. I have no other way there, but you; which I say not, as though I had not assurance enough therein, but because you have too much trouble thereby; nor I have no other end there, then the Pulpit: you are my station, and that my exaltation; And in both, I shall ever endevour, to keep you from being sorry for having thought well of, or being ashamed of having testified well for

Your poor and very true
servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 127 (313)

Also in Gosse (II: 219-20)

Commentary

This letter and Letters No. 125 written the following day can be dated April 2 and 3, 1625, respectively, because they refer to Donne preaching at St. James Palace. The location means that the sermon was preached for the newly crowned King Charles, who commanded that the sermon be published. This inference is confirmed by a contemporary letter writer who writes that the occasion of this sermon was the first time Charles I left his private chambers after becoming king:

> and then dined abroad, in the privy-chamber, being in a plain black cloth cloak to the ankle; and so went after dinner into the chapel, Dr. Donne preaching, Lord Davers carrying the word before him, his majesty looking very pale, his visage being the true glass of his inward, as well as his accoutrements of external mourning. (Sir William Neve, in The Court and Times of Charles the First, i [1848], 3-4, quoted in Bald, Life 468)

For a more complete account of Donne's first sermon before Charles, see Bald (Life 467-68).

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To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre,
at Court.

SIR,
IF I should refuse the liberty which you enlarge to me, of eating in your chamber, you might suspect that I reserved it for greater boldnesses, and would not spend it in this. But, in good faith, I do not eat before, nor can after, till I have been at home; so much hath my this years debility disabled me, even for receiving favours. After the Sermon, I will steal into my Coach home, and pray that my good purpose may be well accepted, and my defects graciously pardoned. Amen.

Yours intirely
J. Donne.

I will be at your chamber at one after noon.

Source: Letters No. 125 (311)

Also in Gosse (II: 220)

Commentary

This letter was written on 3 April 1625, the day after Letters No. 127, and the same day Donne preached the first sermon Charles I heard as king (see Commentary, Letters No. 127).

202

A Letter from the aforesaid J.D. to the aforesaid Sir Robert Carre, Earl of A. setting forth his servant love towards him.

SIR,

YOur man surprised me, as I came into my house; and loth to stay him, or defraud my self of reading your Letter, I read it in his sight, and said, though not so much as I would have written, yet, perchance, more then he hath thought necessary to remember. I had bin long in my chamber, and practised how to put out breath, almost to my last gasp; and how I had been abroad to take in aire, and as a man that hath received mony, but not yet received it; so, I had taken in breath, but not articulated it, nor, perchance, said enough, to let you know, that I shall lose the honour of waiting upon you at your time: which I feel the more, because I desired much to have been in my Lord Chancellor's sight. For, as when I sit still, and reckon all my old Master's Royall favours to me, I return evermore to that, that he first inclined me to be a Minister: So, when I reckon all the favours that I have received from my Lord Chancellor, I return to that, that he was the first man that ever presented my name to my Lord Carlile, and entred me into his service. When I say Grace, and blesse my own dinner, I shall mean yours also, and be your Chaplain, though absent. This I have gained by my going abroad to day, (for I went to visit your servants at Chelsey) that if I must despair of an ability to come to your house, where you are now; yet I hear there, you are comming to another house, where I have a prescription, and have not us'd to be kept out. And I hear also, that your noble Lady is in that case, that a double measure of prayers is due to her, which I shall faithfully pay, because therein I shall do a service to one of yours, before he come into the world. As truly as all my Soul is in every part of me, so hath every part of your family all the love and devotions of

Your humblest and thankfullest servant.

Source: T.M.C. No. 171 (307)

Also in Gosse (II: 190)

Notes

Heading: Earl of A.: Earl of Ancrum

l. 17: Lord Chancellor: Francis Bacon was Lord Chancellor from 7 March 1617 to 1 May 1621.

l. 25: Lord Carlile [Carlisle]: James Hay

Commentary

Bald (Life 161) suggests that it was Sir Francis Bacon who introduced Donne to James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, and cites this letter as evidence. Donne first met Hay around November 1608: Donne writes to Goodyer at that time about how unexpectedly helpful Hay was in presenting Donne as a candidate for the vacant secretaryship in Ireland (Letters No. 145).

This letter can be dated between the deaths of James on 27 March 1625 and Bacon on 9 April 1626. Donne refers indirectly to the death of

James in this letter in the phrase "my old Master's Royall favours," a phrase which echoes references of Donne's to James in a funeral sermon to the Court on 26 April 1625 in which he describes what is for some the end of one era and for others the beginning of another, "a going forth in several wayes: some to the service of their new Master, and some to the enjoying of their Fortunes conferred by their old (Sermons No. 14, p. 291, ll. 418-20).

Bald asserts that the reference to my Lord Chancellor is to Bacon, even though Bacon was dismissed in disgrace for accepting bribes. As Bald (Life 471-72, n. 4) points out:

> (1) The habit of addressing a man by the title of an office, or a woman by a rank no longer held was even stronger in the seventeenth century than it is in England today. (2) Bacon's two successors were Lord Keepers not Lord Chancellors, so that after the death of old Lord Ellesmere in 1617 there was no one else to whom the title could apply. (3) Compare Howell, Epistolae Ho-Elianae, bk. I, sec. iv, letter viii: 'My Lord Chancellor Bacon is lately dead. . . . They say he shall be the last Lord Chancellor, . . . hereafter they shall be only Keepers of the Great Seal, which for title and office are disposable; but they say the Lord Chancellor's title is indelible'.

Bald seems to be correct here, although, as he points out, earlier references to Bacon by Donne do not suggest such cordiality.

Bald (Life 471) infers that Donne's visit to Chelsea was to Sir John and Lady Danvers (Magdalen Herbert). Donne's reference to them as Ker's "servants" suggests a friendly relationship between Ker and Danvers.

203

[To Sir Nicholas Carew (Carey)]

S^{r}
I ame glad I tooke so much good ayre w^{t} y^{ow}; for
since I came from yo^{w}, I haue taken none at all; for
I haue been, by my indisposition, a prisoner in my chamber,
euer since. I thanke God, I haue so far passd ouer
thys fitt, as that I thinke of changinge my ~~pro~~ prison;
to that purpose I haue determind to remove myselfe,
and some few of my family, to chelsey, where I shall
haue roome inough for so few, w^{t} conveniency, and so be
neare, the businesses of or churche, and not far removd
from means of takinge y^{e} liberty y^{w} haue allowd me, to
visit y^{w} sometymes. I go to a family, to w^{ch} I owe much,
and therfore must intreat y^{w} to be my surety for one
debt to them, w^{ch} ys, some tyme, thys summer to bestow
a Bucke upon me. for Gods sakes, S^{r}, teache me good
manners, and deny me, if any way yt disorder yor
purposes. If yt do not, and that I hear not to the contrary
from y^{ow}, I wyll be bold to fetche yt, or send for yt, when
yt may least trouble yo^{w}, and best fitt us. Our blessed
L: God, blesse yo^{w}, and all yo^{rs}, w^{t} all blessednes in the next
world, and the onely way to yt, the constant loue of hys savinge
truthe. Amen.

yor poore frinde and
servant in Chr: Jes:
J: DONNE

At Pauls house. 2i June
1625

Source: Harvard, MS Eng 1290 (Beal No. 32)

Other transcriptions: Charles River, Massachusetts, 1930
(ed. T. Spencer)

Commentary

Donne was apparently ill during the spring of 1625. Bald (Life 471) suggests that this letter and another to Sir Robert Ker (T.M.C. 307) belong to the period of his recovery. In this letter Donne indicates that he has visited Carey briefly and has been confined by illness to his chamber. He also announces his intention to visit Chelsey (at Sir John Danver's house), and asks for a buck from Carey partly to repay their hospitality. Donne had earlier (in a letter of 23 July 1624) told Carey he would not ask for any more bucks. Donne's visit to Chelsey was prolonged by the plague and he did not return to London until 22 or 23 December (Bald, Life 480). There are no records to indicate how closely Donne kept up with the business of the church as he suggests that he will in this letter (Bald, Life 480).

204

To the Honorable kt, and
my most Honored frinde
S^{r} Henry Wotton pro-
uost of Eaton.

S^{r}
Thys ys yo^{r} quietus est from mee; It ys yo^{r} assurance that
I wyll never trouble yo^{w} more about any place in yo^{r} Colledge;
But thys quietus est must beare date from the end of thys
letter; for in the letter, I must make a suite of that kinde,
to yo^{w}: In w^{ch} I know yo^{w} wyll giue a good interpretation of myne
ingenuity, that I would nt forbear euen the troublinge of yo^{w}, when
I had a way presented me, to do any seruice to y^{t} noble family, to
whom I owe euen my posterity. S^{r}, At yor last Election, S^{r} Rob.
More (to whom I haue the honor to be brother in law) had a sonne
elected into yo^{r} schoole, and hys place ys not falln, and so o^{r} hopes
euacuated, that way. Because yt was my worke at first, I would
faine perfit yt; and I ame in the right way of perfitinge yt, when
I addresse my selfe to yo^{w}, who haue a perfit power in the busines,
and haue multiplyed demonstrations of a perfit loue to me. That
w^{ch} was then donne, was donne by way of [--] gratitude, by m^{r} wood-
ford, one of the then opposen, to whom I had giuen a church be-
longinge to our pauls: And for y^{e} fauer w^{ch} yo^{w} shall be pleasd to
afford us herin, I offer yo^{w} mother and daughters, all y^{e} service
that I shall be able to doe, to any servant of yo^{rs}, in any place, of any
of o^{r} Churches. Our most B: savyer, blesse yo^{w} w^{t} all hys graces, and
restore us to a confident meetinge in wholesomer places, and direct us all,
by good ways to good ends. Amen.

yor very true frinde and
humble seruant in Chr: Jes:

from S^{r} John Da[n]vers house at chelsey,
of w^{ch} hou[se], and my L: Carlils at Hauworth,
I make up my Tusculair. 12 Julii. 1625

J: DONNE.

Source: Folger MSS L.b. 540 (Beal No. 33)

Other transcriptions: Loseley MSS. (345-47)

Transcription Notes

l. 20 the first two letters of a word are begun and then crossed out before "gratitude."

Notes

Tusculair [Tusculum]: an ancient town in the mountains southeast of Rome about ten miles from the city where Cicero had a favorite villa (Harvey 441).

Commentary

Sir Henry Wotton was the provost of Eton at the time of this letter. As provost, he had the power of nominating a certain number of scholars elected to the foundation (Smith I: 203). As Donne's letter implies, they were old friends, having met and become friendly at Oxford when Wotton was sixteen and Donne twelve; Donne appears confident that Wotton will help resolve the problem. The boy referred to was probably Sir Robert More's fourth son Nicholas, who was admitted to King's College Cambridge, as a King's scholar from Eton, in 1633 (Bald, Life 477). A letter from Sir Robert More to Wotton on the same subject also occurs in the Losely MSS at the Folger. Sir Robert More was, of course, Donne's wife's brother and the eldest son of Sir George More.

205

[To Sir Thomas Roe]

Our blessed Sauyour establish in you, and multiply to you, the seals of hys eternall election, and testify [his] y^{or} gracious purposes toward you in the next world for euer, by a continuall succession of hys outward blessings here, and sweeten yo^{r} age, by a rectified conscience of havinge spent yo^{r} former tyme well, and sweeten yo^{r} transmigration by a modest but yet infallible assurance of a present vision w^{t} him. Amen.

yo^{r} Lps letters of the i6 of August, were delyuered to me, in Novemb: in w^{ch} I ame first affected w^{t} that infection, w^{ch} yo^{r} Lp: told me, at that tyme, raignd in those parts. I make yt another argument that our good god hath a holy and gracious purpose to enwrapp us in the same euerlasting communion of Joye, that enwrappes us now, in the same communion of Calamity: for yo^{r} number of 2000 a day, was so far attempted by us, that in the City of London, and in a mile compas, I beleiue there dyed i000 a day. But, by reason that these infections are not so frequent w^{t} us, the horror, I presume was greater here: for the Citizens fled away, as out of a house on fire, and stuffd theyr pockets w^{t} theyr best ware, and threw themselfs into the high-ways, and were not receyud, so much as into barnes, and perished so, some of them w^{t} more money about them, then- would haue ^{bought} the villadge where they dyed: A Justice of peace, into hys Examination yt fell, told me, of one yt dyed so, w^{t}m i400^{l} about him. I^{s}catterd my family; and, to be near as I could, to y^{e} inspection of o^{r} churche, I remoud for a tyme to chelsey, where w^{t}in a few weeks; the infection multiplyed so fast, as that yt was no good Manners, to go to any other place, and so I haue been in a secular Monastery, and so far in a conformity to yo^{r} Lp: too. Of those good things w^{ch} God intends us in the next world, he affords us a sense, and an anticipation in thys: So of those honors, and rewards (w^{ch} ys a word that we may be bolder w^{t}, in matters of thys nature, than when wee speake of heauen) w^{ch} yor noble and powerfull frinds intend yo^{w} here, I doubt not but you haue ^{good} assurances from them; To me, yt was a great comfort, both for y^{or} merit, and the states acknowledgemet, (for, as S: August: says of Temptations, and gods disposinge of them to our good, sometymes the Deuyll ys away, and sometymes the woman, so that god frustrates the temptation, so the Deuyll counterfayts god so far, as y^{t} sometymes he corrupts publique instruments of state, w^{t} priuate vices, and then there ys no merit, sometymes he corrupts great persons w^{t} a facility of admittinge Calumnyes, and so there is no acknowledgement, no reward of true meritt, but in thys we had our comfort, that before the seale was remoud from y^{e} B: of Lincoln, there beeinge speeche of many removes, for ten days together, they were full of assurance, that yo^{r} Lp: was secretary; My Lord, in the poore low way that I haue gone, in w^{ch} I haue not made many, nor wide stepps, since my first leape, w^{ch} was my very entrance into thys callinge, I haue found that missinge and faylinge of some places, haue advancd my fortune, and that, though I were no great pretender, nor thruster myselfe, yet the promises in w^{ch} some great persons had enlardged themselfs towards mee, and euen the voyce and rumor, w^{ch} sometymes had invested me, in some vacant place, conduced to my future settlinge. yo^{r} Lp: ys in the hands of a person of whose lardgenes in doinge good, we abound w^{t} examples of particular persons advancd by him; but that exalts not my wonder, because he hath had y^{t} in hys powor to do so much: But hauinge also the same power to do harme, and havinge conferd great fauors upon persons y^{t} haue ~~brough~~ proued very vnthankfull, and practisinge to hys preiudice and so been put to a necessity of declaringe hys power, by deuestinge them, yet I [cannot] recover any Example of any, whom in such a iust displeasure he hath left ~~werst~~ worse, then he found him, but satisfyenge himselfe in havinge w^{t}drawen those additions w^{ch} he pinnd upon him, hath left him to enioye hys former condition. By so good a hand, hath god made up myne and ys kneading and moldinge yor Lps fortune, though fortunes of y^{t} great kinde, be Elephants, and by being in the wombe, and not made up so soone, as o^{rs} that consist of peeces, and but a few and but smalle, In the parturition and bringinge forth of so great issues, god ys the Midwyfe, for he refuses no name, or office, to do his servants good; Amongst yo^{r} Men-midwyfes, I shall allways assist yt, w^{t} my humble prayers, both for ye birth of yor daughter, w^{ch} ys Honer in thys world, and of yo^{r} sonne, w^{ch} ys Happiness in the next. I wyll be bold to add this circumstance of gladness, w^{ch} we had, in thys approche of y^{ors} to that place, that the opinion of S^{r} Dud: Carleton remove at that tyme (into whose place, o^{r} worthy frinde S^{r} Rob: Kyllegrew ys to goe) did not divert nor retard yo^{r} comminge into yo^{rs}. I stay thus longe from givinge yo^{r} Lp an accoount, of some other parts of yo^{r} Lps letter, because when I come to that, I ame swallowd, and fall into y^{e} consideration of yo^{r} Lps continuall fauors to me and my obligations from yo^{r} Lp: I owe no man more, but ame happy in my Creditor, who ys content to take such payment as I can make, and to call my Gratitude the sylver, and my Deuotion the gold in w^{ch} he ys willinge to be payd. Amongst those fauors, thys w^{ch} yo^{r} Lp hath donne now, ys a great one, to take so expressly into yo^{r} Consideration the recommendation of that gentleman, of [whom] I writt last to yor Lp. But I thinke, that by thys letter, I do absolutely restore yor Lp: to yo^{r} liberty; for since that tyme, he hath embracd another employment, for Savoy; And though he be not yet gone, yet, (I thinke) he hath had hys priuy seale, some months. In thys generall Disperson, I know not where to seeke him; for the infection hath made thys vylladge so infamous, as y^{t} I go not to court, though yt be at Hampton. But except a letter of myne, w^{t}in a month after thys, refresh my request to yor Lp: be pleased to take my restoringe yo^{w} to yor full liberty, as a part of payment of my debt, for y^{t} forward fauor to me. All mighty god blesse yo^{w} where yo^{w} are, and where yo^{w} would be, when yo^{w} are there, and bringe you thither. Amen.

At Chelsey. 25. Novemb:
1625.

yr Lps
humblest and thankfullest
seruant in chr. Jes:
J: DONNE.

Yor Lp: allways allowd me the freedome to communicate to you, whatsoeuer I writt, or meditated; therfor I continue yt in tellinge yor Lp: how I haue spent thys summer in my close emprisonment. I haue reviewd as many of my sermons, as I had kept any notes of; and I haue written out, a great many, and hope to do [more]. I ame allready

come to y^{e} Number of 80: of w^{ch}, my sonne, who, I hope-
wyll take y^{e} same profession, or some others in y^{e} world
of middle understandinge, may hereafter make some use.

Source: Public Record Office; SP. 16/10/28 (Beal No. 34)

Other transcriptions: Hayward (486-89)

Gosse (II: 222-25)

Transcription Notes

1. 6 of the postscript appears to read "more."

Commentary

Despite the lack of an address on this letter, it was clearly written to Sir Thomas Roe. Roe's answering letter to Donne still exists and confirms this. Donne, in his letter, attempts to console Roe for not being appointed to a secretaryship of state despite many rumors of his appointment. The person "in whose hands Roe is" refers to Buckingham. As Bald points out (*Life* 478 n.), Roe cultivated the favor of a number of the same people as Donne, including the Countess of Bedford, the Countess of Huntington and the Earl of Carlisle. Roe replies that Donne's letter is the first news he has heard of the rumors and that he was surprised and gratified to be considered for such a high position, one which he did not aspire to or expect to get (Bald, *Life* 478). Other aspects of Donne's letter also suggest that it was addressed to Roe. As Bald (*Life* 477) points out, this letter, like others written by Donne to Roe, includes a considerable amount of "pious moralizing" of a kind that appealed to Roe. Roe writes to Donne:

> I haue receiued your Benediction, and enjoy therein more and more assurance of Gods fauor that his Saincts on earth (which certeynly are the ministers and Guides of his Church, and Priests and Prophetts, of

> these wee haue Testimony of their doctrine, from dead Saincts none,) doe remember and commend mee to his Grace, and protection in so great an absence; and of this I find a singular Comfort, that therby I am comprehended in a Church, though I liue where there is none. (S.P. 97/10/257)

Finally, Donne's comparison of the plague killing two thousand a day where the recipient of the letter lives (which he says is a place where these infections are frequent) with the one thousand a day around London indicates that his correspondent lives abroad. The effect of the plague at Constantinople, Roe's residence, would be consistent with Donne's comment. Gosse (II: 222) mistakenly suggests that the letter was addressed to the Earl of Dorset.

This letter contains the important biographical information of when Donne began collecting his Sermons for publication.

206

To the worthiest Knight Sir Henry Goodere [Goodyer].

> SIR,
>
> OUr blessed Saviour, who abounds in power and goodnesse towards us all, blesse you, and your family, with blessings proportioned to his ends in you all, and blesse you with the testimony of a rectified conscience, of having discharged all the offices of a father, towards your discreet and worthy daughters, and blesse them with a satisfaction, and quiescence, and more with a complacency and a joy, in good ends, and ways towards them, *Amen*. Your man brought me your Letter of the 8 of *December* this 21 of the same, to *Chelsey*, and gives me the largenesse, till friday to send a letter to *Pauls* house. There can scarce be any peece of that, or of those things whereof you require light from me, that is not come to your knowledge, by some clearer way, between the time of your Letter, and this. Besides the report of my death, hath

thus much of truth in it, that though I be not dead, yet I am buried within a few weeks after I immured my self in this house, the infection strook into the town, into so many houses, as that it became ill manners, to make any visits. Therefore I never went to *Knoll*, nor *Hanworth*, nor *Kenton*, nor to the Court, since the Court came into these quarters, nor am yet come to *London*; therefore I am little able to give you account of high stages. Perchance you look not so low, as our ordinary Gazetta, and that tells us, (with a second assurance) that the D. of *Brunswick*, *Christian*, is dead of an Ague. My L. of *Dorset* even upon the day, when he should have been installed with his six fellowes, fell sick at *London*; and at Court (which does not exalt all men) his Fever was exalted to the plague; but he is in good convalescence. Of the Navy I hear of no great lim come back yet, but my L. of *Essex*; something of the disappointing of the designe they had, is imputed to some difference, in point of command, between him and the M^{r}. of the Ordinance, my L. of *Valencia*, but as yet, there is little manifested. Already is issued a Proclamation, that there be no disbanding of the Souldiers, upon their landing, in what part soever, and that his Majesty hath present imployment for them. What the main busines at *Haghe* hath been, I know nothing; but I hear, that their offer of pawning of Jewells to a very very great value, to the States or private men, hath found no acceptance, at least found no money. Occasionally I heard from the *Haghe*, that the Queen having taken into her care, the promoving and advancing of some particular mens businesses, by way of recommendations to the Duke, expressed her self very royally, in your behalf. This I tell you not, as though you knew it not, but because I had the fortune to see it in a Letter of the simple Gentlewoman, from thence; by which name, if you know her not, I have omitted heretofore to tell you a good tale. They continue at Court, in the resolution of the Queen pastorall; when *Q. Anne* loved gamboils, you loved the Court; perchance you may doubt whether you be a thorough Courtier, if you come not up to see this, The Queen a Shepperdesse: but I speak not this, by way of counsail, to draw you up, it is not only Non Dominus, sed ego, but nec Deus nec ego, to call you hither, but upon fair appearances of usefull commings. M^{r} George Herbert is here at the receipt of your letter, and with his service to you, tells you that all of Uvedall house are well. I reserve not the mention of my Lady Huntington to the end of my Letter, as grains to make the gold weight, but as tincture to make the better gold, when you finde room to intrude so poor and impertinent a name, as mine is, in her presence. I beseech you, let her Lad: know, that she hath sowed her favours towards me, in such a ground, that if I be grown better (as I hope I am) her favours are grown with me, and though they were great when she conferred them, yet, (if I mend every day) they increase in me every day, and therefore every day multiply my thankfulnesse towards her Ladiship: say what you will (if you like not this expression) that may make her Ladiship know, that I shall never let fall the memory, nor the just valuation of her noble favours to me, nor leave them unrequited in my Exchequer, which is, the blessings of God upon my prayers. If I should write another sheet, I should be able to serve your curiosity no more of Dukes nor LL. nor Courts, and this half line serves to tell you, that I am truly

Your poor friend and humble servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 84 (233-237)

Also in Gosse (II: 226-28)

Notes

Non Dominus, sed ego: "not the Lord, but I"

nec Deus nec ego: "neither God nor I"

Commentary

This letter is dated by Donne's reference to receiving Goodyer's letter of 8 December on 21 December at Chelsea (where Donne was staying with Sir John Danvers and Magdalen Herbert) and having until Friday (December) to send a letter to Donne's house at St. Paul's Cathedral, where Goodyer's man would call for it to deliver it to Goodyer at Polesworth. Goodyer's letter must refer to a false report of Donne's death because Donne alludes to such a report. Donne remained at Chelsea because the plague was in force and visiting stopped to avoid the possible spreading or receiving of infection. Donne has not, therefore, visited the Earl of Dorset (Sir Edward, the 4th Earl) at Knoll (Knole), the Earl of Carlisle (James Hay) at Hanworth, or the Court at Hampton.

1626

207

A Letter from the same Person to the Queen of Bohemia, upon presenting of a Sermon to her.

> THough your Majesty have a large patience, yet I humbly beseech you, to remember, that I have not exercised it, since the boldnesse of presenting to your Majesty, that Sermon, which was the first that was preached to the KING, almost a year since. We read of some, that have had anniversary agues, one fit a year, and no more. If my zeal to appear in your Majestie's presence, push me to an anniversary importunity, and to shew my self thus before you once a year, and no more; your Royall goodnesse, will be pleased to call it a modest boldness, and to say to your self, in my behalf, Surely this poor Soul, who comes to me every year, in these his meditations for the publique, takes me with him every morning, in his private Prayers, and Devotions, to Almightie God. And when I am defective in that sacrifice, let me lose all the effect of all my other sacrifices, which I make for the happinesse of your Majesties, &c.

Source: T.M.C. No. 164 (298)

Also in Gosse (II: 233)

Commentary

The date of this letter (early 1626) can be determined by Donne's reference to the enclosed sermon. Donne is apparently referring here to his First Sermon Preached to King Charles (Sermons, vi, No. 12) given on 3 April 1625. As the Royal Chaplain attendant in April, Donne preached the first sermon to Charles after he became King. James had died

27 March 1626. In this sermon Donne, aware of Charles's forthcoming marriage to a French princess, warned him of the dangers of Catholicism:

> as wee, at last shall commend our Spirits, into the hands of *God*, *God* has commended our Spirits, not onely our civill peace, but our Religion too, into the *hand* of the *Magistrate*. And therefore, when the *Apostle* sayes, *Studie to bee quiet*, it is not quiet in the blindnesse of the *Eye*, nor quiet in the *Deafenesse* of the *Eare*, nor quiet in the *Lamenesse* of the *Hand*; the just discharge of the dueties of our severall places, is no *disquieting* to any man. (*Sermons*, vi, No. 12, p. 245, ll. 143-54)

This kind of warning, mild as it is, may have given this sermon a special appeal for Queen Ann, whose husband, the Elector of the Palatine, had been regarded as the defender of the Protestant cause in Europe.

208

To the R: Wors^{vll} S^{r}
Nicolas Carew k^{t}

S^{r}
Vpon the many testimo[nies I have h]ad of yo^{r} fauors to my-
selfe, I ame sure yt e[those] also who are deryud fro$\underline{m}$
me. Therfore beeinge now to [consider tha]t w^{ch} may be had for my
poore daughter Constance [I am one who] is bold to ioyne yo^{u},
and s^{r} Tho: Grymes, in ra[ifying that] assurance from her
husband. Those writinges [should] be ready w^{t}in 2 or 3 days:
and I make account that [eve]ry c[ ]t no[w] wyll lead
yo^{u} to town some tyme thys [summer]^{w} to do me the
fauor, if yo^{u} do so come [, to send a] seruant of [yo]^{rs} to let
me know, that yo^{u} are [in London and I] wyll wayt [upon] <you> and
make my excuse, for thys [rudeness] in troublin[g yo]^{u} so much,
in so smalle a matter. O^{r} blessed [sa]uyor bl[ess you] and all
yo^{r} family. Amen.

Yo^{r} poore [frin]d and
seruant [in Ch]r. Jes:
J: Donne

At Pauls house. 26 jun:
1626

Source: Huntington, HM 7281 (Beal No. 35)

Other transcriptions: Gosse (II: 232-33)

Transcription Notes

Parts of this letter are undecipherable, apparently from water damage.

l. 6: now]: "w" is written over "t"

l. 7: is]: could be "n"

Commentary

This letter refers to one of the few quarrels Donne was involved in of which any record exists. Bald (Life) discusses the circumstances thoroughly. The letter asks Donne's brother-in-law, Sir Nicholas Carey, along with Sir Thomas Grymes, another of Donne's brothers-in-law on his wife's side of the family, to witness the signing of the deeds and act as co-trustee of the property settlement between his son-in-law Edward Alleyn and his daughter Constance. Edward Alleyn was one of the most famous Elizabethan actors and a relatively wealthy man, although his financial situation was complicated by his establishment of Dulwich College. Bald (Life 448) gives Alleyn's summary of the financial agreement for the marriage which was arrived at on 21 October 1623. The wedding took place 3 December 1623. Alleyn received Constance's dowry from Donne, but did not settle any property on her until 1626, as Donne's letter indicates. Alleyn's failure to settle occurred partly because of Alleyn's financial situation and partly because he was dissatisfied with Donne's treatment of him and Constance in a number of matters which he outlines in a letter to Donne (Bald, Life 448-49). The occasion for this letter was Donne's refusal to loan Alleyn 500 pounds which he had previously offered Alleyn. The issue was finally settled three days after Donne's letter was written when the documents were signed. Bald

(Life 485-86) notes that the two leases Alleyn eventually turned over were not the ones originally agreed on. One of them, a messuage on the Bankside known as the Barge, Bell, and Cock, was a well-known brothel. Alleyn also gave them a statute staple for £2000 as security that on his death Constance should receive the £1500 he had promised to settle on her. Alleyn lived only a few months longer. He died on November 25, after having confirmed the settlement in his will and adding £100 in cash to be paid immediately on his death to his widow. The match between Alleyn and Constance Donne appears to have occurred through Sir Thomas Grymes and his family. Edward Alleyn was a close friend of Sir Thomas Grymes who, unlike Donne, did not hesitate to lend Alleyn money and offered him £200 "at a quarter of an howres warning" (Bald, Life 486, n. 2).

209

To the Right Reverend
father in God, and my very
good L: The L: Bishop
of Lincoln

My very good L:
Thys poore man, M^{r} Holney, was, in the quality of a chapleyne, in S^{r} George Mores house, then when I marryed into that family. By that occasion I knew him first, and haue since receynd him to haue been honest and painfull: and, out of hys small meanes, to haue brought up hys sonne, to some ability of seruinge God, in the ministery. In w^{ch} sonnes behalfe, the father desires my testimony of him to yo^{r} Lp: To w^{ch} I do also willingly add my humble suite, that yor Lp: would be pleasd to admitt that resignation in hys behalfe, w^{ch}, (as he informes me) the present incumbent ys wyllinge to make, if yt disappoint no other purpose of yor Lps therin. And so w^{t} my humble

thanks to yor Lp: for yor maniFo ld fauors to me, and my
humble prayers for all kinds of happinesses to yo^r^ Lp: I rest
yo^r^ Lps
humblest and thankfullest
Servant
At my poore house at pauls J: DONNE.
22 Aug: i626.

Source: Lincolnshire Archives Office U269/1 (Beal No. 36)

Facsimile in Bald (Life, facing 567)

Other transcriptions: None

Notes

1. 4: recynd: reckoned

1. 4: painfull: painstaking, conscientious (O.E.D.)

Commentary

The outcome of Donne's reference for Mr. Holney's son is unknown. The Bishop of Lincoln, John Williams, was also the Lord Keeper. See the Commentary on Donne's letter to Buckingham (No. 168) for a brief description of Williams' career.

1627

210

To the Right Honourable Knight Sir Robert Karre,
at Court.

SIR,
I Have obeyed the formes of our Church
of Pauls so much, as to have been a so-
lemn Christmas man, and tryed conclusi-
ons upon my selfe, how I could sit out the
siege of new faces, every dinner. So that I
have not seen the B. in some weeks. And
I know not whether he be in case, to afford
that privacy, which you justly desire. This
day, I am in my bondage of entertaining.
Suppers I presume, are inconvenient to you.
But this evening I will spie upon the B. and
give you an account to morrow morning
of his disposition; when, if he cannot be
intire to you, since you are gone so farre
downwards in your favours to me, be plea-
sed to pursue your humiliation so farre as
to chuse your day, and either to suffer the
solitude of this place, or to change it, by
such company, as shall waite upon you,
and come as a visitor and overseer of this
Hospitall of mine, and dine or sup at this
miserable chezmey.
Your humblest and thankfullest servant
4 Jan. 1626.
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 128 (315)

Also in Gosse (II: 241)

Notes

1. 22 chezmey: chez moi: house of mine

Commentary

This letter belongs together with Letters No. 126, which was written the following day and which reports the results of Donne's "spying" upon the Bishop of London. Sir Robert Ker apparently had some business with the Bishop (George Montaigne) (Bald, Life 371) that he wanted to discuss privately. Donne warns Ker that it might be difficult to speak privately to Montaigne.

211

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

SIR,

I Pursued my ambition of having the honour to kisse your hands some where, so farre, as to inform my selfe occasionally of my great neighbour. And I perceive he is under an inundation of uncertain commers, which he cannot devest, except I had your leave, to speake plain to him. A second inconvenience is, that he is so deafe, that we must speak to the whole house, if we will speake to him. And a third is, that I am in a riddling, rather a juggling indisposition, fast and loose, and therefore dare not stirre farre. Yet Sir, I am not thereby unfit to receive the honor of seeing you here, if greater businesse have not overcome, or worn out, your former inclinablenesse to come into these quarters. If you shall be pleased to say to my man, that you will make as though you dined with me to day, and come, if your businesse require your going to his Lordship, you may dine with him, after you have fasted with me. To day, or any day, which may be more yours, I aske it of you with all earnestnesse, on this side importunity, which is the detestation of

Your humblest and thankfullest servant

J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 126 (312)

Also in Gosse (II: 216)

Commentary

This letter can be dated by its connection with Letters No. 128, which is dated 4 January 1626 [1626/27]. In both letters Donne responds to a single inquiry by Ker about the possibility of meeting the Bishop of London to discuss privately some business that Ker had with him. Donne also discusses in both letters the demands of the holiday season and its attendant entertaining, and the illnesses in his household.

212

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre.

SIR,

A Few hours after I had the honour of your Letter, I had another from my Lord of Bath and Wells, commanding from the King a Copy of my Sermon. I am in preparations of that, with diligence, yet this morning I waited upon his Lordship, and laid up in him this truth, that of the B. of Canterburies Sermon, to this hour, I never heard syllable, nor what way, nor upon what points he went: And for mine, it was put into that very order, in which I delivered it, more then two moneths since. Freely to you I say, I would I were a little more guilty: Onely mine innocency makes me afraid. I hoped for the Kings approbation heretofore in many of my Sermons; and I have had it. But yesterday I came very near looking for thanks; for, in my life, I was never in any one peece, so studious of his service. Therefore, exceptions being taken, and displeasure kindled at this, I am afraid, it was rather brought thither, then met there. If you know any more, fit for me, (because I hold that unfit

for me, to appear in my Masters sight, as
long as this cloud hangs, and therefore, this
day forbear my ordinary waitings) I beseech you to intimidate it to
Your very humble and very thankfull servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 122 (305-06)

Also in Gosse (II: 243-44)

Notes

l. 3 My Lord of Bath and Wells: Bishop Laud

l. 4 the King: Charles I

l. 8 B. of Canterburies: William Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury

Commentary

This letter can be dated 2 April 1627 by the sermon Donne discusses which he gave before King Charles in the Royal Chapel on 1 April 1627. The king was apparently offended by what he took to be some similarities between Donne's sermon and an earlier sermon preached by Archbishop Abbot. Abbot was out of favor with the king for refusing to licence Montague's Appello Caesarem, which advocated High Church doctrines, for refusing to licence a sermon by Robert Sibthorpe which advocated an extreme view of the Royal Prerogative, and for preaching a sermon that gave offense to the king (Bald, Life 492). The king and Laud perceived similarities between Donne's sermon and Abbot's, and believed that Donne was deliberately supporting Abbot. Donne, who knew nothing of Abbot's sermon, was forced to ask for the king's forgiveness, which was given. Donne's letters suggest that he had visited Abbot regularly since before his appointment as Dean of St. Paul's in 1621; the king and Laud may have interpreted Donne's sermon in view of Donne's close relations with Abbot. For a more complete discussion of this incident, see Bald (Life 491-94).

213

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre,
at Court.

SIR,

I Was this morning at your door, somewhat early; and I am put into such a distaste of my last Sermon, as that I dare not practise any part of it, and therefore though I said then, that we are bound to speake aloud, though we awaken men, and make them froward, yet after two or three modest knocks at the door, I went away. Yet I understood after, the King was gone abroad, and thought you might be gone with him. I came to give you an account of that, which this does as well. I have now put into my Lord of Bath and Wells hands the Sermon faithfully exscrcibed. I beseech you be pleased to hearken farther after it; I am still upon my jealousie, that the King brought thither some disaffection towards me, grounded upon some other demerit of mine, and took it not from the Sermon. For, as Card. Cusanus writ a Book Cribratio Alchorani, I have cribrated, and re-cribated, and post-cribated the Sermon, and must necessarily say, the King who hath let fall his eye upon some of my Poems, never saw, of mine, a hand, or an eye, or an affection, set down with so much study, and diligence, and labour of syllables, as in this Sermon I expressed those two points, which I take so much to conduce to his service, the imprinting of persuasibility and obedience in the subject, And the breaking of the bed of whisperers, by casting in a bone, of making them suspect and distrust one another. I remember I heard the old King say of a good Sermon, that he thought the Preacher never had thought of his Sermon, till he spoke it; it seemed to him negligently and extemporally spoken. And I knew that he had weigh-ed every syllable, for halfe a year before, which made me conclude, that the King had before, some prejudice upon him. So, the best of my hope is, that some over bold allusions, or expressions in the way, might divert his Majesty, from vouchsafing to observe the frame, and purpose of the Sermon. When he sees the generall scope, I hope his goodnesse will pardon collaterall escapes. I intreated the B. to aske his Majesty, whether his displeasure extended so farre, as that I should forbear waiting, and appearing in his presence; and I had a return, that I might come. Till I had that, I would not offer to put my self under your roof. To day I come, for that purpose, to say prayers. And if, in any degree, my health suffer it, I shall do so, to morrow. If any thing fall into your observation before that, (because the B. is likely to speake to the King of it, perchance, this night) if it amount to such an increase of displeasure, as that it might be unfit for me to appear, I beseech you afford me the knowledge. Otherwise, I am likely to inquire of you personally, to morrow before nine in the morning, and to put into your presence then

Your very humble and very true, and
very honest servant to God and
the King and you
J. Donne.

I writ yesterday to my L. Duke, by my L. Carlile, *who assured me of a gracious acceptation of my putting my self in his protection*.

Source: *Letters* No. 124 (307-10)

Also in Gosse (II: 244-46)

Textual Notes

ll. 15/16 exscrci/bed: exscribed (copied)

Notes

l. 22 cribrate: to sift. The earliest reference in the O.E.D. to "cribrate" used in this manner is 1631.

Commentary

This letter deals with the same sermon as Letters No. 122. That this letter was written on 3 April is indicated by Donne's statement that he has finished copying out the sermon that offended King Charles for Bishop Laud ("my Lord of Bath and Wells). (The sermon was requested 2 April.) Donne cannot see what might have offended the king, and fears some other cause than the sermon. The king's displeasure was not so severe, however, that Donne was forbidden to wait on the king. With the help of Ker and the Earl of Carlisle (James Hay), who passed on a letter to Buckingham ("my L. Duke"), and with Buckingham's reply that he would protect Donne, Donne's safety was assured, although he was obliged to apologize to Charles. See the Commentary to Letters No. 122 and Bald (Life 491-94).

214

To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Karre, at Court.

SIR,

I Humbly thanke you, for this continuing me in your memory, and enlarging me so far, as to the memory of my Soveraign, and (I hope) my Master. My Tenets are always, for the preservation of the Religion I was born in, and the peace of the State, and the rectifying of the Conscience; in these I shall walke, and as I have from you a new seal thereof, in this Letter, so I

> had ever evidence in mine own observation, that these ways were truly, as they are justly, acceptable in his Majesties eare. Our blessed Saviour multiply unto him all blessings; Amen.
>
> Your very true and intire servant in Chr. Jes.
>
> J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 123 (306-07)

Also in Gosse (II: 246)

Commentary

This is the final letter having to do with Donne's sermon of 1 April 1627 discussed in Letters Nos. 122 and 126 (see also the Commentaries of those letters). It was, presumably, written not long after Donne's letter to Ker of 3 April 1627. The letter indicates that Ker has spoken to the king on Donne's behalf and written to Donne that he has regained favor. Ker's letter thus becomes Donne's "new seal" of the king's approval.

1628

215

A Letter of much kindnesse from Doctor Donne, *to the same friend*. [To Mrs. Cokayne]

My noblest Sister,

IN your Letter from *Bath*, you told me so particularly how I might return an Answer, that I presume you intended it for a commandment, that I should do so. Therefore I write, though not therefore onelie; for though my Obedience be a good reason, yet I have another of higher value, that is, my Love; of which love of mine to you, one principall act having alwaies been my prayers for you. At this time, I knew not how to expresse that love that way, because not knowing what seasons of weather are best for your use of the *Bath*, I know not what weather to pray for. I determine my prayers therefore in those Generalls, that God will give you whatsoever you would have, and multiplie it to you when you have it. If I might have forborn this Letter till to morrow, I could have had time enough to enlarge my self, for *Saturday* is my day of conversation and liberty. But I am now upon *Friday* evening, and not got through my preparation for my *Paul*'s service upon *Sunday*. If you look for news from hence, let my part (who knows but small things) be this, That Sir *John Brock* is married to Sir *William Bam*'s third daughter. So, my noble Sister, our most blessed Saviour blesse you, with his best blessings, here and hereafter. *Amen*.

Your very true Friend, and
Brother, and Servant.

Source: *T.M.C*. No. 191 (340)

Also in Gosse (II: 256)

Textual Notes

1. 27 Sir John Brock [Brook]

Sir William Bam's [Bamfylde]

Commentary

The date of this letter can be established from the date of the marriage between Sir John Brook and Frances Bamfylde which took place on 16 May 1628 (Gosse II: 256). Sir William Bamfylde, or Banfield, had been a tenant of Christopher Brooke's house in Drury Lane after the death of Brooke's wife. Sir John Brooke was a cousin of Christopher. Donne probably knew both parties of the marriage (Bald, Life 508, n. 1). According to Gosse (II: 256), this is the first of the five Donne letters written to Mrs. Cokayne. Bald (Life 508, n. 2) states that the letter was written on 30 May, the Friday before Whit Sunday, which fell on 1 June 1628, because in this letter Donne refers to preparing to give a sermon, and a sermon of Donne's for 1 June 1628 survives. The date of May 16 seems at least as likely because Donne may well have given a sermon on 17 May, and would be more likely to include current news than news two weeks old.

216

A Letter between the same Persons.
My noblest and lovingest Sister [Mrs. Cokayne]

NOthing returns oftner with more comfort to my memorie, than that you nor I ever asked any thing of one another, which we might not safelie grant; and we can ask nothing safelie, that implies an offence to God, or injury to any other person. I fall upon this consideration now, upon this occasion: Your Letter, upon the two and twentieth of August, which I received this day, laies a commandment upon me, to give you an account of my state in health; you do but ask me how I do, and if your Letter had come yesterday, I could not have told you that. At my return from Kent to my gate, I found Pegge had the Pox; so I withdrew to Prickham, and spent a fortnight there. And without comming home, when I could with some justice hope, that it would spread no farther amongst them, (as, I humbly thank God, it hath not, nor much disfigured her that had it) I went into Bedfordshire. There, upon my third Sunday, I was seized with a Feavour, which grew so upon me, as forced me to a resolution, of seeking my Physitian at London. Thither I came in a day, and a little piece; and within four miles of home, I was surprised with an accident in the Coach, which never befell me before, nor had been much in my contemplation, and therefore affected me much. It was a violent falling of the Uvula, Which when Doctor Fox (whom I found at London, and who had not been there in ten daies before) considered well, and perceived the feavour complicated with a Squinancie; by way of prevention of both, he presentlie took blood; and so with ten-daies-starving in a close prison, that is, my bed, I am (blessed be God) returned to a convenient temper, and pulse, and appetite, and learn to eat, and this day met the acceptablest guest in the acceptablest manner, your Letter, walking in my chamber. All which I tell you with these particularities, lest my sicknesse might be presented by rumour worse, than God hath been pleased to make it: For, I humbly thank him, now I feel no present ill, nor have reason to fear worse. If I understand your Letter aright, much of your familie is together; if it be so, entreat them, for your sake, to receive my service, which, by your hand, I present to them all. If they be otherwise severed, yet, in the ears of Almighty God, to whom, I know, they all daily pray; my daily Praiers for them all, shall also

> meet them all. And that's the onely
> service which I can promise my self an
> ability to do to God's Church now,
> since this infirmity in my mouth and
> voice, is likelie to take me from any
> frequent exercise of my other duty of
> Preaching. But, God will either enable
> me, or pardon me. His will be done upon
> us all, as his goodnesse hath been overflowingly
> poured out upon
> *Your poor Friend, and lovingest*
> *Brother and Servant*.

Source: *T.M.C*. No. 192 (341)

Also in Gosse (II: 257-58)

Notes

l. 15 Kent: Donne's parish of Sevenoakes. Donne attempted to visit his country parishes every summer.

l. 15 Pegge: Margaret Donne was baptized 20 April 1615. Nothing else is known of her childhood. See Bald (*Life* 556).

l. 16 Pox: smallpox

l. 16 Prickham: Peckham. Peckham was the home of Sir Thomas and Lady Grymes, Donne's brother- and sister-in-law, with whom his family had the closest relationship.

l. 22 Bedfordshire: Donne's parish of Blunham

l. 33 uvula: the conical fleshy prolongation hanging from the middle of the pendent margin of the soft palate (*O.E.D.*)

l. 37 Squinancie: a severe tonsillitis with suppuration

Commentary

Gosse (II: 258) dates this letter 24 August 1628. Donne's letter is a response to Mrs. Cokayne's letter of 22 August, but there is no internal evidence to indicate that 24 August is the exact date. Bald (Life 510) is content to date the letter "at the end of August." If Gosse's date is approximately correct, Donne returned from Kent at the end of the first week of July, spent the next two weeks of July at Peckham, the last week of July and the first two weeks in August at Blunham, and returned to London about August 14 or ten days before he received Mrs. Cokayne's letter. Donne discusses his "falling of uvula" in other letters (see No. 218, for example). Dr. Fox was Donne's physician; he attended Donne for the month or so after Donne's return to London during his final illness in 1630-31. Dr. Fox was responsible for Donne's monument in St. Paul's Cathedral.

217

A Letter from the aforesaid Doctor Donne to the same friend, occasioned by the death of her son. [To Mrs. Cokayne]

My noble and vertuous Sister,

IF I had had such an occasion as this to have written to you, in the first year of our acquaintance, I had been likelie to have presented you with an Essay of Morall Comfort. Now my Letter may well be excused, if it amount to an Homilie. My profession and my willingnesse, to stay long upon so good an office, as to assist you, will bear it. Our souls are trulie said to be in everie part of our bodies; but yet, if any part of the bodie be cut off, no part of the soul perishes, but is suckt in to that soul that remains, in that that remains of the body. When any limb or branch of a family is taken away, the vertue, the love, and (for the most part) the patrimonie and fortune of him that is gone, remaines with the Family. The family would not think it self the lesse, if any little quillet of ground had been evicted from it; nor must it, because a clod of earth, one person of the family, is removed. In these cases, there is nothing lost; one part, the soul, enjoyes a present gain; and the other, the body, expects a future. We think it good husbandry to place our childrens portions so, as that in so many years it may multiply to so much: Shall we not be as glad to lay their bodies there, where onely they can be mellowed and ripened for glorification. The perversnesse of the father put you to such a necessity of hiding your sons, as that this son is scarce more out of your sight, by being laid under ground, than he was before. And perchance you have been longer time, at some times, from meeting and seeing one another in this world, than you shall be now from meeting in the glory of the Resurrection. That may come sooner, than you looked he should come from the Bath. A man truly liberall, or truly charitable, will borrow monie to lend: For, if I be bound to assist another with my meat, or with my mony, I may be as much bound to assist him with my credit, and borrow to lend. We do but borrow Children of God, to lend them to the world. And when I lend the world a daughter in marriage, or lend the world a son in a profession, the world does not alwaies pay me well again; my hopes are not alwaies answered in that daughter or that son. But, of all that I lend to, the Grave is my best pay-Master. The Grave shall restore me my child, where he and I shall have but one Father; and pay me my Earth, when that Earth shall be Amber, a sweet Perfume, in the nostrills of his and my Saviour. Since I am well content to send one sonne to the Church, the other to the Warrs; Why should I be loth to send one part of either sonne to Heaven, and the other to the Earth. Comfort your self in this, my noble Sister, that for those years he lived, you were answerable to God for him; for yet, he was so young, as a Mother's power might govern him; and so long he was under your charge, and you accountable for him. Now, when he was growing into those years, as needed a stronger hand, a Father's care, and had not that; God hath cancelled your Bonds, discharged you, and undertakes the office of a Father himself. But, above all, comfort your self in this, That it is the declared will of God. In sicknesses, and other worldlie crosses, there are anxieties, and perplexities; we wish one thing to day, in the behalf of a distressed child or friend, and another to morrow; because God hath not yet declared his will. But when he hath done that, in death, there is no room for anie anxietie, for anie perplexitie, no, not for a wish; for we may not so much as pray for the dead. You know, David made his child's Sicknesse his Lent, but his Death his Easter: he fasted till the Child's death, but then he returned to his repast, because then he had a declaration of God's will. I am farre from quenching in you, or discharging naturall affections; but, I know your easie apprehensions, and over-tendernesse in this kind. And, I know some persons in the world, that I wish may live, especially for this respect, because I know their death would over-affect you. In so noble and numerous a family as yours is, every year must necessarily present you some such occasion of sorrow, in the losse of some near friend. And therefore I, in the office of a Friend, and a Brother, and Priest of God, do not onelie look that you should

take this patientlie, as a declaration
of God's present will; but that you
take it catechistically, as an instruction for the future; and that God,
in this, tells you, That he will do
so again, in some other your friends.
For, to take any one crosse patiently, is but to forgive God for once;
but, to surrender one's self entirely to God, is to be ready for all that
he shall be pleased to do. And, that
his pleasure may be either to lessen
your crosses, or multiply your strength,
shall be the prayer of
Your Brother, and Friend, and
Servant, and Chaplain,
JOHN DONNE.

Source: T.M.C. No. 193 (349)

Also in Gosse (II: 260-62)

Notes

ll. 5, 7 Essay of Morall Comfort; Homilie: Donne states here what is apparent in his letters: early prose letters were concerned with morality (right and wrong, virtue and vice, ethical considerations); whereas he now writes a homily, "a religious discourse addressed to a congregation" (O.E.D.). Donne also describes some earlier prose letters as "homilies" but apologizes for them and uses "homily" in another sense, that of a "tedious moralizing discourse."

l. 21 quillet: The sense here must be a small piece. The O.E.D. defines quillet as a verbal nicety or subtle distinction (1588), which cannot be Donne's meaning.

l. 43 the Bath: Mrs. Cokayne's son died at Bath.

ll. 97-99 the death of David's child: Donne explains his own allusion. The reference is to II Samuel 12:13-23.

Commentary

The date of this letter is determined by the date of the death of Mrs. Cokayne's son Thomas. He was born 1 January 1612. Gardner and Healy date this letter 1629, apparently accepting Aston Cokayne's remark in the title of his 'Epitaph on my younger brother Mr. Thomas Cokaine' as precise that he died at Bath 'about the 18th year of his age.' Bald (*Life* 509), however, accepts 1628 as the year of his death as given in the *Cokayne Memoranda*, 1869 (pp. 40-41). Bald suggests that the "about" indicates that Aston Cokayne was not certain of his brother's age.

The letter contains two conceits that appear in some of Donne's most famous passages. For example, Donne begins his attempt to console Mrs. Cokayne on the death of her son by using a conceit similar to the famous conceit from the *Devotions*' 17 Meditation. In the meditation Donne uses the conceit to suggest a sense of loss:

> No Man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; if a *Clod* bee washed away by the *sea*, *Europe* is the lesse, as well as if a *Promontorie* were, as well as if a *Mannor* of thy *friends*, or of *thine owne* were; Any Mans *death* diminutes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*. (Raspa 87)

In the letter to Mrs. Cokayne, Donne alters the same conceit to console her. She is not lessened by the death of her son; both his soul, which has gone to heaven, and his body, which expects to be resurrected, are in better states than when her son was alive:

> The family would not think it self the lesse, if any little quillet of ground had been evicted from it; nor must it, because a clod of earth, one person of the family, is removed. In these cases, there is nothing lost; one part, the soul, enjoyes a present gain; and the other, the body, expects a future.

The second famous conceit is Donne's striking and paradoxical comparison of a body rotting in the grave, to the body's "ripening for glorification"--preparing for the resurrection. The body in the grave is superior to the living body because it is one step closer to God and no longer actively resisting God:

> We think it good husbandry to place our childrens portions so, as that in so many years it may multiply to so much: Shall we not be as glad to lay their bodies there [in the grave], where onely they can be mellowed and ripened for glorification.

Donne uses similar conceits in his last two verse letters to the Countess of Bedford ("Epitaph on Himselfe" and "Though I be dead"). He also discusses the dissolution of the body in the grave in a more secular way in a number of the songs and sonnets, including "The Dissolution" and "The Funeral." In "The Funeral," for example, the lady's wreath of hair preserves her dead lover's body:

> That subtile wreath of haire, which crowns mine arme;
> The mystery, the signe you must not touch,
> For 'tis my outward Soule,
> Viceroy to that, which then to heaven being gone,
> Will leave this to controule,
> And keepe these limbes, her Provinces, from dissolution.
> (Gardner, Elegies 90)

Donne repeatedly discusses the ideas of the transformation of the body and soul throughout his writing. As is the case with his other famous conceits, he alters his argument to suit the rhetorical situation.

218

To the R: Honorable
my very good L: The
Earle of Middlesexe

My Honorable good L:

You^{r} Lp: releiues me, w^{t} yo^{r} best Money: for thys descent to the Consideration of Men in to lower Corners, ys the best vertue of the greatest. And I returne my part in my best Money, w^{ch} ys, true, and harty prayers for yo^{r} Lp: and all yo^{r} Noble family. I perceyue our wydow Mat, hath not yet put ouer all her sorrow for her dead husband; euery thinge seems so lamentable to her. for I humbly thank god, I ame not, at thys tyme, affected wt any such paneFull or dangerous accident, as yo^{r} Lps goodnes hath apprehended, and that poore soule might finde some iust cause to fear in me, when I had the honor of her last visit. It ys true, that after my poore service, in my Cuntry-Churche thys summer, I was throwen home, in a full feuer, and in a squinancy begonne My phisicians by a present bleeding, freed me of any encrease of Eyther. But I haue euer since, continued in a fallinge of uvula; w^{ch}, though y^{t} be w^{t} out inflammation, or any other dangerous accident, makes me afrayd to put myselfe to ye exercise of my poore function. And I haue no way, to recompence my late application of myselfe to ye service of gods Churche, but to do that sedulously, since I did beginne, w^{ch} I should haue begonne sooner. Therfore I should be sorry, if thys should make me a silenc'd Minister. I haue tryed once, at S: Dunstans, since thys distemper overtooke me, and, I thanke God, not been the worse for yt. yor Lps lettre to M^{r} More, w^{ch} came unseald I was bold to read; and, because I found a Postscript, besides y^{t} w^{ch} concerned me I sent the letter presently. It was Eueninge; And though my Man found him newly come [y]et upon y^{or} Lordships lettre, he was very ~~willi~~ wyllinge to come presen[tly] [to] me. But my Man makinge him to understand my case and that yt might very endure a farther tyme, he wyll come to me thys afternoone. Then we shall consult; and practise, as he finds cause. And if I be not yll inough, (God knowes, nobody ys worse) for hys skyll, yet I shall haue a great comfort, that I haue so near a neighbor, who through the strength of yo^{r} Lps fauor, wyll haue an Ey towards me, if I growe worse. I returne againe to my humble thanks to yor Lp: and humbly beseech yo^{r} Lp: upon occation, to giue him thanks, for hys cheerfullnes in present offringe himselfe to me; and of hys farther proceedinge, I shall be bold hereafter to giue yo^{r} Lp: an account:

Yo^{r} Lps. humblest and thankfullest seruant in Chr: Jes:

At Pauls house. 18 Nov:
1628.

J. DONNE.

Source: Kent Archives Office, U 269/1 (Beal No. 37)

Cranfield miscellaneous correspondence 1625-41

Other transcriptions: Partly transcribed in Potter and Simpson (VIII: 24-25)

Commentary

Donne thanks Lord Middlesex (Lionel Cranfield) for offering him the services of his physician. An otherwise unidentified mutual friend, "Our wydow Mat," apparently told Lord Middlesex that Donne was seriously ill. Donne describes her account of his current state of health as exaggerated but admits that he is ill. He is pleased with the co-operative attitude of the physician, has arranged to consult him the next day, and promises to report the results to Middlesex. The message to Donne was enclosed in a letter to Mr. More, presumably one of Donne's brothers-in-law. The Earl of Middlesex, Lionel Cranfield, was another old friend of Donne's. They had apparently both been members of a club that met in the Mitre tavern probably in the latter part of 1611. The club included many of Donne's other friends and was the source of Coryate's Crudities, a collection of comic poems to which Donne contributed (Bald, Life 191). Cranfield was also, along with Donne and many of his other friends, a member of the parliament of 1614. In 1615 Cranfield gained Buckingham as a patron and was appointed one of the Masters of Requests in charge of hearing petitions to the King by poor men and royal servants. In 1618 Cranfield was appointed Master of the Great Wardrobe; in 1621 he was appointed Lord Treasurer; and in 1622 he was made the Earl of Middlesex. Cranfield's rise was due in part to Buckingham and in part to his own financial acumen. He reduced corruption and waste in James' household and in the navy. By 1624 his economics became distasteful to Buckingham and Prince Charles. He was charged with corruption, convicted, and stripped of his offices on 13 May 1624 (Akrigg 97-102). This letter, then, was written after Cranfield's fall from power. Helen Gardner suggests that Lionel Cranfield's father was the subject of Donne's "Elegie on the L.C.," and that it was written to console Donne's friend on his father's death, which occurred in 1595 (Gardner, Elegies 145-46). Bald (Life 78) notes that this was possible, although there is no evidence to connect Donne with Lionel Cranfield before 1611.

1629

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To the R: wor:^{full} S^{r}
George More kt.

S^{r}
The busines of thys churche, and all other busines w^{ch} con-concerne me in thys town determine thys weeke: So that I might be at my liberty to go to do the duty to my churche in the Cuntry, next weeke, but for the expectation of that i00^{l}, w^{ch} you are to pay some days after that. If therfore yt stand not wth yo^{r} conveniency to pay yt before, because I presume yo^{w} wyll be gone out of town, before that i0th of July, I ame bold to intreat yo^{w} to let me know by whose hands yt shall be payd me then. for besides that yt were a great disappointment of my necessary service in the Cuntry, to be stayd any longer in thys town, so not to receyue yt at yt day, wyll put me to so great a trouble, as to make my poore wyll anew, and to subtract from my other children, theyr part of this i00^{l}. Therfor I humbly intreat yo^{w}, that I may hear from yo^{w}, before yo^{r} goinge out of town, and rest
yo^{r} poore sonne in law, and
humble servant in Chr: Jes:
J: DONNE.

At Pauls house.
22 Jun: 1629.

Source: Folger MS L.b. 542 (Beal No. 38)

Other transcriptions: _London Mercury_ (13 [1925]: 159-62)

Bald (_Life_ 513-14)

Commentary

Sir George More was, of course, Donne's father-in-law. The church business that Donne refers to was a commission on which he sat with the Archbishop and several of the bishops to resolve a dispute within the chapter at Salisbury (Bald, _Life_ 513). Donne's churches in the country were Blunham, Bedfordshire and Sevenoaks, Kent. Bald (_Life_ 514) suggests that the £100 was a loan made by Donne to Sir George More. He earlier (_Life_ 429) cites Walton, who tells how Donne refused to accept the £20 a quarter that Sir George More paid him in lieu of a dowry. For Bald, these confirm Walton's report that one of the satisfactions of Donne's life was that he had "liv'd to be useful and comfortable to my good Father-in-law Sir George More, whose patience God hath been pleased to exercise with many temporal Crosses" (Bald, Life 527). Donne died on 31 March 1631; he had been seriously ill in 1623, 1625, and 1628, and was always exceptionally preoccupied with death, even for his time. Consequently, his concern about keeping his will current is not surprising; nor is his scrupulous concern for his children, which is characteristic of Donne's sense of duty that became evident through his actions in both the personal and professional sides of his life after he finally gained suitable employment.

1630

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[To George Garrard]

SIR,

THis advantage you, and my other friends have, by my frequent Fevers, that I am so much the oftner at the gates of heaven, and this advantage by the solitude and close imprisonment that they reduce me to after, that I am thereby the oftener at my prayers, in which, I shall never leave out your happinesse; and, I doubt not, but amongst his many other blessings, God will adde to you some one for my prayers. A man would be almost content to dye, (if there were no other benefit in death) to hear of so much sorrow, and so much good testimony from good men, as I, (God be blessed for it) did upon the report of my death. Yet, I perceive it went not through all; for, one writ to me, that some (and he said of my friends) conceived, that I was not so ill, as I pretended, but withdrew my self, to save charges, and to live at ease, discharged of preaching. It is an unfriendly, and, God knows, an ill grounded interpretation; for in these times of necessity, and multitudes of poor there is no possibility of saving to him that hath any tendernesse in him; and for affecting my ease, I have been always more sorry, when I could not preach, then any could be, that they could not hear me. It hath been my desire, (and God may be pleased to grant it me) that I might die in the Pulpit; if not that, yet that I might take my death in the Pulpit, that is, die the sooner by occasion of my former labours. I thanke you, for keeping our George in in your memory, I hope God reserves it for so good a friend as you are, to send me the first good newes of him. For the Diamond Lady, you may safely deliver Roper, whatsoever belongs to me, and he will give you a discharge for the money. For my L. Percy, we shall speake of it, when we meet at London; which, as I do not much hope before Christmas, so I do not much fear at beginning of Tearm; for i have intreated one of my fellowes to preach to my Lord Maior, at *Pauls* upon Christmas day, and reserved Candlemas day to my self for that service, about which time also, will fall my Lent Sermon, except my Lord Chamberlaine beleeve me to be dead, and leave me out; for as long as I live, and am not speechlesse, I would not decline that service. I have better leasure to write, then you to read, yet I will not oppresse you with too much letter, God blesse you, and your sonne; as

Your poor friend and humble servant
in Christ Jesus,
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* 1651-54, No. 87 (241-44)

Collation

Letters 1651-54

LXXX Sermons, 1640

Poems 1635-1719

Walton, 1658

Title: No title — *Letters*, pp. 241-44; *LXXX Sermons*, p. B$_5^b$; Walton, pp. 100-103

To my honour'd friend G.G. Esquier. 1635 pp. 288-89

To my honour'd friend G.G. Esquire. 1639 pp. 288-89; 1649, 50, 54 pp. 277-78

To my honoured friend G.G. Esquire. 1669 pp. 274-75

To my honoured friend G.G. *Esquire*. 1719 pp. 243-44

SIR,] SIR 1635-1719 *Sermons* Sir, Walton *SIR* 1719

l. 1 THis] This Walton you,] you 1635-1719 *Sermons* Walton

l. 2 have,] have 1635-1719 *Sermons*
Fevers] fevors 1635-39 feavers *Sermons*
fevers 1649-1719 Walton

l. 3 oftener] oftner 1635-39 Walton gates] Gates Walton

l. 4	heaven,] heaven; Sermons 1719 and] And Sermons
l. 5	solitude and] solitude, and 1635-1669 solitude & Walton imprisonment,] imprisonment Walton 1719
l. 6	after,] after: 1635-39 after; Walton after 1719 thereby] so much Sermons Walton
l. 7	prayers;] prayers 1635-1719 Prayers, Sermons which,] which Sermons
l. 8	happinesse;] happiness, 1635-54 happiness, 1669 happiness; 1719 and,] And Sermons
l. 9	not,] not 1635-1669 Sermons amongst] among Walton many other] other Walton blessings,] blessings 1635-1669
l. 10	adde to you some one] adde some one to you 1635-1669 Sermons Walton add some one to you 1719
l. 11	prayers] Prayers Sermons be almost] almost be Walton
l. 12	dye,] die 1635-54 die, Sermons dye Walton dy, 1669
l. 13	hear] heare 1635-1654 Sermons
l. 14	testimony] Testimony Walton men,] men Walton
l. 15	I,] I 1635-1719 Sermons God be blessed for it] blessed be God for it 1719
l. 16	death. Yet,] death; yet 1635-1719 death: Yet Sermons
l. 17	through] thorow 1635-1669 all;] all, 1635-1719 for,] for 1635-1719 For Sermons unto] to 1635-1719 me,] me Walton
l. 18	said] said, 1719 conceived, that I] conceived I 1635-1669 Sermons conceived, I 1719
l. 19	ill,] ill 1635-1719 Sermons
ll. 20-21	my] m^y 1669 self to save charges, and to live] selfe to live 1635 Sermons self to live 1649-1719
l. 21	preaching.] preaching: 1635-1669
l. 22	and,] and 1649, 1650 Sermons God knows,] (God knowes) 1635-1654
l. 23	interpretation,] interpretation; Sermons Walton 1719

ll. 23-28 for in these times of necessity, and multitudes of poor there is no possibility of saving to him that hath any tendernesse in him; and for affecting my ease, I have been always more sorry, when] for I have alwayes beene sorryer when 1635
for I have alwayes been sorryer when 1649-54
for I have alwayes beene sorrier when *Sermons* 1719
for I have alwaies beene sorryer when Walton
for I have alwaies been sorryer when 1669

l. 28 then] than 1635-39 1719

l. 29 be,] be 1635-1719 *Sermons* Walton
that they] they 1635-1719 *Sermons* Walton
hear] heare 1635-1654

l. 30 beene] beene 1635-39 desire] desire, *Sermons* Walton
(and] and Walton

l. 31 grant it me)] grant it) 1635-1719 *Sermons*
grant it, Walton die] dye Walton

l. 32 Pulpit;] Pulpit 1635-69 if] If *Sermons*

l. 33 die] dye 1635-39 Walton

ll. 34-49 my former labours. I thanke you, for keeping our *George* in your memory, I hope God reserves it for so good a friend as you are, to send me the first good newes of him. For the Diamond Lady, you may safely deliver *Roper*, whatsoever belongs to me, and he will give you a discharge for the money. For my L. *Percy*, we shall speake of it, when we meet at *London*; which, as I do not much hope before Christmas, so I do not much fear at beginning of Tearm; for I have intreated one of my fellowes to preach to my Lord Maior, at *Pauls* upon Christmas day, and reserved Candlemas day to my self for that service, about which time] those labours. Sir, I hope to see you about Candlemas, about which time also 1635-1669
those labours. Sir, I hope to see you about *Candlemas*; about which time also 1719
those labours. Sir I hope to see you presently after *Candlemas*, about which time *Sermons*
those labours. Sir, I hope to see you presently after *Candlemas*; about which time Walton

l. 50 Lent Sermon] lent Sermon at Court 1635
Lent Sermon at Court 1635-69 *Sermons*
Lent-Sermon at Court Walton Lent-Sermon at Court 1719

l. 51 Lord] *Lord* Walton Chamberlaine] Chamberlain 1669 1719
Chamberlain Walton

l. 52 out; for] out, for 1635-69 out: For *Sermons*
out of the roll; but Walton

l. 53	live,] live Walton speechelesse] speecheless 1669 1719
ll. 54-55	not decline] not willingly decline *Sermons* leasure] leisure 1719 Walton
l. 55	write,] write 1635-1719 Walton then] than 1635-39 1719 read,] reade, 1635-39 *Sermons* read; Walton 1719 will] would Walton
l. 55	not oppresse] not oppress 1669 1719 not willingly oppresse *Sermons* Walton too] two 1669 letter;] letter: 1635-54 letter. 1669 1719 Letter: *Sermons* Letter. Walton
l. 56	sonne;] Sonne; 1635 Sonne, 1639-49 son, *Sermons* Son, 1650-1719 Son Walton as] as I wish 1635-1719 as I wish Walton
Closing	*poor*] *poore* 1635-69 Walton and humble servant] *and servant* 1635-1719 *Sermons* Walton undated] January 7./1630 1635-69 January 7./1630. *Sermons* *January 7*, 1630. 1719 Walton does not include a date in the text of the letter, but he indicates in his comments that the letter was written in early January 1630. Jesus,] Iesus, 1635-69 Walton Jesus, 1719 J. Donne] I.D. 1635-69 Iohn Donne. *Sermons* J.D. 1719 The entire text of the letter in *LXXX Sermons* is italicized except for the heading and the closing, including the date. This is the reverse of the other texts of the letter.

Textual Notes

I have not included collations of the versions of this letter printed in Walton's *Lives* of 1670 and 1675. Novarr in *The Making of Walton's Lives* discusses the single minor change that occurs in each edition (which I have confirmed). Novarr states (47) that "[t]he only change in 1670 [from the text of this letter in 1658] is perhaps a slip of the printer's": "*I doubt not but amongst his other blessings*" becomes "I doubt not amongst his other blessings." The only change in 1675 "is a conscious one" from "God blesse you, and your sonne, as / *Your poor* friend and humble servant" to "God so bless you and your Son as I wish, to / Your poor friend and servant." Novarr suggests that this is nonsense and that Donne's closing puzzled Walton. Walton, or perhaps the printer, has probably mispunctuated Walton's elaboration intended to amplify God's blessing with Donne's.

The omission from 1635 of the extended passage that begins on line 25 in the Letters indicates that the Letters, not the Poems 1635, provide the most authoritative text for this letter. David Novarr in The Making of Walton's Lives makes a convincing case (pp. 33-48) that Walton edited the four letters added to the 1635 Poems (as well as participating in the arrangement of the rest of the edition), that he deliberately added those four letters to "counteract the licentiousness" of some of the poems added to that edition, and that he altered the texts of the letters added to 1635 in a number of ways to show Donne as a more religious figure. Moreover, Novarr shows that the editor of 1635 (Walton) obviously and deliberately misdated this letter January 7 and omitted the portion of the letter which indicates that it was written before Christmas. After Donne's son deleted the bogus date and added the edited passage from the original in the Letters, Walton revised his version of the letter from 1640 only by omitting the specific day. He retains the month (January) and the altered version of the letter that supports the heightened impression of Donne as a divine that was Walton's goal. Walton's changes to this letter cause Donne to appear as a more singlemindedly religious figure in two main ways: first, Walton omits Donne's remarks about his secular and family interests (the references to money, the diamond Lady, and his son George), and, secondly, Walton omits the evidence of the date of the letter and the information that Donne has engaged someone to preach for him on Christmas Day. As Novarr indicates, Walton's changes create a more fervent Donne who is extremely anxious to meet his obligations to preach. Novarr further outlines a number of minute changes that Walton makes to clarify Donne's intent. An examination of the collation of this letter shows a close relationship between the texts of the 1635 _Poems_ (and later editions), _LXXX Sermons_, and Walton's _Lives_.

Commentary

This is the fourth and final extant letter written to George Garrard in the fall and winter of 1630. It can confidently be placed as the final letter in the sequence because of the conclusion of Donne's business with the "Diamond Lady." It can also be dated in December 1630 (despite the date of 7 January 1630/31 in the 1635 _Poems_) because in the version that appears in the _Letters_ Donne clearly indicates that he is writing the letter before Christmas when discussing his return to London and the arrangements he has made to find a substitute to preach to the Lord Mayor at St. Paul's on Christmas Day. Donne indicates his intention of returning to London by Candlemas Day (2 February, the feast of the purification of the Virgin Mary [or presentation of Christ in the Temple] celebrated with many candles). Donne's mother, however, died at Abury Hatch in January and was buried on 28 January at the nearby church at Barking. Bald (_Life_ 525) states that there is no evidence that Donne preached at St. Paul's on Candlemas Day, and repeats without comment Walton's statement that Donne had received notice to preach at Whitehall on the first Friday in Lent (12 February). Donne preached his famous Death's Duell sermon on Friday, 25 February. Walton's description of

Donne's last days is contradictory. He implies that Donne was in London at least 10 days before his sermon at Whitehall because Dr. Fox had him drink milk for 10 days as part of his cure, but states that Donne returned to London "some few days before his appointed day of preaching" (see Bald, Life 524-26).

221

Doctor Donne to Mrs. Cockaine, occasioned by the report of his death [Mrs. Cokayne].

My noble Sister,
THough my Man, at London, might
have made such a return to your
Man's Letter, from himself, as might have
given satisfaction enough; yet, because
there were so many hours, between his
receipt of that Letter, and the return of
the Carrier, as might admit that delay,
he thought best to acquaint me with it.
I am not sorrie he did so; for, I have found
this rumour of my death to have made
so deep impressions, and to have been so
peremptorilie believed, that from very re-
mote parts, I have been entreated to signifie
under my hand, that I am yet alive. If
you have believed the report, and mour-
ned for me, I pray let that that is done
alreadie, serve at the time that it shall be
true. To mourn a second time, were to
suspect, that I were fallen into the se-
cond death, from which, I have abun-
dant assurance, in the application of the
superabundant Merits of my Saviour.
What gave the occasion of this rumour,
I can make no conjecture. And yet the
hour of my death, and the day of my
buriall, were related in the highest place
of this Kingdom. I had at that time no
kind of sicknesse, nor was otherwise, than
I had been ever since my feavour, and
am yet; that is, too weak at this time of the
year to go forth, especiallie to London,
where the sicknesse is near my house, and

> where I must necessarilie open my self
> to more businesse, than my present state
> would bear. Yet, next tearm, by God's
> grace, I will be there; at which time, I
> have understood from my Lord Carlile's
> house, that the Dean of Exceter will be
> there: which hath made me forbear to
> write, because I know how faintlie and
> lamelie businesses go on by Letters, in respect of Conferences. In the mean time,
> my prayers for your happinesse shall fill all
> the time of
>
> Your true Friend, and Brother,
> and Servant.

Source: T.M.C. No. 190 (338)

Also in Gosse (II: 259)

Commentary

I. A. Shapiro confidently dates this letter December 1625. Bald (Life 521-22, n. 5) agrees and believes that this letter was written at about the same time as a letter to George Garrard (Letters [No. 87], pp. 241-44) in which Donne also discusses the rumors of his death. Gosse (II: 259) dated both letters November 1628. The Garrard letter is not dated in the Letters but appears in the Poems of 1635, where it is dated January, 7, 1630. The actual date of the Garrard letter, however, is December 1630. See my discussion of the Garrard letter (No. 219). If this letter to Mrs. Cokayne was written at about the same time as the Garrard letter, as Bald believes, it must also belong to January 1630. See also Letters No. 87.

222

A Letter between the same Persons.

My noble dear Sister, [To Mrs. Cokayne]

I Am come now, not onely to pay a Feavour every half year, as a Rent for my life; but I am called upon before the day, and they come sooner in the year than heretofore. This Feavour that I had now, I hoped, for divers daies, to have been but an exaltation of my damps and flashings, such as exercise me sometimes four or five daies, and passe away, without whining or complaint. But, I neglected this somewhat too long, which makes me (though, after I took it into consideration, the Feavour it self declined quickly) much weaker, than, perchance, otherwise I should have been. I had Doctor *Fox* and Doctor *Clement* with me, but, I thank God, was not much trouble to them. Ordinary means set me soon upon my leggs. And I have broke my close prison, and walk'd into the Garden; and (but that the weather hath continued so spitefully foul) make no doubt, but I might safely have done more. I eat, and digest well enough. And it is no strange thing, that I do not sleep well; for, in my best health, I am not much used to do so. At the same time, little *Betty* had a Feavour too; and, for her, we used Doctor *Wright*, who, by occasion, lies within two miles of us; and he was able to ease my sicknesse, with his report of your good health, which, he told us, he had received from you. But I found it not seconded in your own Letters, which I had the honour to receive by Mr. *Hazard*. My noble sister, I am afraid that Death will play with me so long, as he will forget to kill me; and suffer me to live in a languishing and uselesse age, A life, that is rather a forgetting that I am dead, then of living. We dispute whether the dead shall pray for the living: and because my life may be short, I pray with the most earnestnesse for you now. By the advantage of sicknesse, I return the oftner to that holy exercise, and in it joyn yours with mine own Soul. I would not have dignified my self, or my sicknesse with saying so much of either, but that it is in obedience to your Command, that I should do so. And though there lye upon me no Command, yet there lies a necessitie growing out of my respect, and a nobler root, than that my love to you, to enlarge my self, as farre as I have gone alreadie, in Mr. Hazards businesse. My noble Sister, when you carrie me up to the beginning, which it pleases you to call a promise to your self, and your noble Sister; I never slackned my purpose of performing that promise. But if my promise, which was, that I should be readie to assist him in any thing I could, were translated by you, or your noble Sister, or him, that I would give him the next Living in my gift, certainlie we speak not one language, or understand not one another, and I had thought we had; This which he imagined to be vacant, (for it is not yet, nor any way likely) is the first that fell to me, since I made that promise. And, my noble Sister, if a person of my place, from whom, one Scholler in each Universitie sucks something, and must be weaned by me, and who hath otherwise a latitude of importunate friends and verie many obligations, have a Living once in five or six yeares fall in his gift, (for it is so long since I gave any) and may not make a good choice with freedome then, it is hard; yet it is not my fortune to doe so now: for, now there is a living fallen (though not that); I am not left to my choice. For my Lord Carlile, and Percy have chosen for me: but trulie such a man as I would have chosen; and for him, they laid an obligation upon me three yeares since, for the next that should fall: yet Mr. Hazard presses you to write for that, because he to whom my promise belongs, hath another before, but doth he or his Lord owe me any thing for that? yet Mr. Hazard importunes me, to presse that Chaplain of my Lord, that when he takes mine, he shall resign the other to him, which, as it is an ignorant request, (for if it be resign'd, it is not in his power to place it upon Mr. Hazard) so it is an unjust request, that I that give him fiftie pounds a year, should take from him fortie. But amongst Mr. Hazards manifold importunities, that that I took worst, was, that he should write of domestique things, and what I said of my Son, to you; and arme you with that plea, that my Son was not in Orders. But, my noble Sister, though I am far from drawing my Son immaturelie into Orders, or putting into his hands any Church with cure; yet there are many Prebends and other helps in the Church, which a man without taking Orders, may be capable of, and for some such I might change a Living with cure, and so begin to accommodate a Son in some preparation. But Mr. Hazard is too piercing. It is good counsell, (and as I remember I gave it him) that if a man deny him any thing, and accompany his deniall with a reason, he be not too searching, whether that be the true reason or no, but rest in the deniall: for many times it may be out of my power to doe a man a courtesie which he desires, and yet I not tied to tell him the true reason; Therefore out of his Letter to you, I continue my opinion, that he medled too far herein. I cannot shut my Letter, till (whilst we are upon this consideration of reasons of denialls) I tell you one Answer of his, which perchance may weaken your so great assurance of his modestie. I told him that my often sicknesses, had brought me to an inability of Preaching, and that I was under a necessitie of Preaching twelve or fourteen solemn Sermons every year, to great Auditories, at Paules, and to the Judges, and at Court; and that therefore I must think of conferring something upon such a man as may supplie my place in these Solemnities: And surely, said I, I will offer them no man in those cases which shall not be at least equall to my self; and, Mr. Hazard, I do not know your faculties. He gave me this answer, I will not make comparisons, but I do not doubt but I should give them satisfaction in that kind. Now, my noble Sister, whereas you repeat often, that you and your sister rested upon my word, and my worth; and, but for my word and my worth, you would not have proceeded so far: I must necessarily make my protestation, that my word and my worth is, herein, as chast, and untouch'd as the best Maiden-head in the world. For, my noble sister, Goes there no more to the giving of a Scholler a Church in London: but that he was a young Gentleman's School-master? You know the ticklishnesse of London-Pulpits, and how ill it would become me, to place a man in a London-Church that were not both a strong and a sound man. And therefore, those things must come into consideration before he can have a Living from me; though there was no need of reflecting upon those things, when I made that generall promise, that I would assist his fortune in any thing. You end in a phrase of indignation and displeasure, rare in you towards me, therefore it affects me; which is, that he may part from me, as I received him at first, as though I were likely to hinder him. The heat that produced that word I know is past, and therefore, my most beloved Sister, give me leave to say to you, that he shall not part from me, but I shall keep him still in my care, and make you alwaies my judge of all omissions

Your faithfull Friend, and
Servant.

Source: T.M.C. No. 194 (349)

Also in Gosse (II: 271-74)

Notes

ll. 8-9 damps and flashings: damp - depression of spirits (O.E.D.) 1606. flashings - sudden fevers?

l. 18 Doctor Fox and Doctor Clement: Both fellows of the College of Physicians (Gosse II: 27)

l. 31 little Betty: Donne's daughter Elizabeth, baptized on 14 June 1616

l. 32 Doctor Wright: another fellow of the College of Physicians and later Cromwell's physician

ll. 64-65 your noble sister: Bald (Life 503) suggests that this refers to Cordelia, wife of Sir Roger Aston.

Commentary

Ann Cokayne was the daughter of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston. She married Thomas Cokayne of Ashbourne, Derbyshire, who deserted her ostensibly to devote himself to the composition of a Greek lexicon. Donne probably met Mrs. Cokayne through Goodyer because Pooley Hall in Warwickshire, a Cokayne manor, adjoined Sir Henry Goodyer's Polesworth estates (Bald, Life 501-02).

Nathaniel Hazard, the subject of much of this letter, was a tutor of the Cokayne children. "He matriculated sizar [a sizar was an undergraduate member admitted under this designation and receiving an allowance from the college enabling him to study. The name probably indicates that the person received his "sizes" free (O.E.D.)] from Queens' in 1615, took his B.A. in 1619-20, ordained deacon (London) 1624 and priest in March 1624/5 (Bald, Life 395, n. 2). There are no records to show that Hazard ever obtained more than a curacy (Bald, Life 517). Mrs. Cokayne's son, Sir Aston Cokayne, the poet and dramatist, addressed a poem 'To Mr. Nathaniel Hazard and his Wife, on their Marriage' (Poems, 1658, p. 152) (Bald, Life 395, n. 2)

Gosse (II: 274) dates this letter in January 1631, during Donne's last illness. J. P. Feil (344) dates the letter soon after 15 January

1630. Milgate states that Bald (Life 516, n. 2) "was inclined to place the letter about Aug., 1630" but there are indications he would have come to agree with I. A. Shapiro, who says that the letter cannot be later than 1628 and may be as early as 1625-26. Neither Shapiro nor Milgate give any reasons for this date. The date of August 1630 probably assumes the letter was written from Abury Hatch in Essex, which was the estate of Samuel Harvey, who became Constance Donne's second husband on 24 June 1630. She was the widow of Edward Alleyn, the famous Shakespearian actor and the founder of Dulwich College (see Bald, Life 448-50).

223

To my very much honoured friend George Garrard Esquire at Sion.

SIR,

I Know not which of us wonne it by the hand, in the last charge of Letters. If you wonne, you wonne nothing, because I am nothing, or whatsoever I am, you wonne nothing, because I was all yours before. I doubt not but I were better delivered of dangers of relapses, if I were at London; but the very going would indanger me. Upon which true debility, I was forced to excuse my selfe to my Lord Chamberlaine, from whom I had a Letter of command to have Preached the fifth of November Sermon to the King. A service which I would not have declined, if I could have conceived any hope of standing it. I beseech you intreat my Lord Percy in my behalfe, that he will be pleased to name George to my L. Carlile, and to wonder, if not to inquire, where he is. The world is disposed to charge my Lords honour, and to charge my naturall affection with neglecting him, and, God knowes, I know not which way to turn towards him; nor upon any message of mine, when I send to kisse my Lords hands, doth my Lord make any kinde of mention of him. For the Diamond Lady, when time serves, I pray look to it; for I would fain be discharged of it. And for the rest, let them be but remembred how long it hath been in my hands, and then leave it to their discretion. If they incline to any thing, I should chuse shirt Hollond, rather under then above 4 s. Our blessed Saviour multiply his blessings upon that noble family where you are, and your self, and your sonne; as upon all them that are derived from

Your poor friend and servant
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 107 (281-83)

Also in Gosse (II: 265-66)

Notes

Heading: Sion House: Sion House, Middlesex, was the residence of the Earl of Northumberland, in whose service Garrard was at this time. The four letters Donne wrote to Garrard in the fall and winter of 1630 all appear to have been sent to Sion House, although this is the only letter so headed.

Commentary

This letter and the three following letters to Garrard were written from Aldborough Hatch (Abury Hatch is the phonetic spelling), the new home of his daughter Constance. Constance had remarried on 24 June 1630, to Samuel Harvey, a grandson of Sir James Harvey, alderman of London, with whom Donne's father had been apprenticed. Constance's first husband, Edward Alleyn, had died on 25 November 1626. (See the Commentary for Letter No. 207 for more information about Alleyn.) Donne had gone to visit Constance at the end of August; his illness forced him to remain at Abury Hatch until February 1630/31, when he returned to London to preach his final sermon and to die.

Gosse (II: 265) dates this letter at the end of October 1630. Bald (Life 518) places the letter before 2 November 1630, because that is when the second of four letters written in a series to George Garrard is dated in the 1635 Poems. Gosse does not give specific reasons for his date. Bald (Life 518) suggests that Donne's discussion of his health in this series of letters indicates the progression of his illness and that this letter is logically Donne's first reference to it. Hester (xxi) dates this letter 1 November but gives no specific explanation of this date. The letters are clearly linked by Donne's discussions of his inability to preach because of ill health, and in this letter Donne tells of being forced to refuse the king's command to preach on 5 November. This letter must, therefore, have been written around the end of October. This letter can confidently be assigned to 1630 because of Donne's long illness in the fall of that year, and also because of Donne's inquiry about his son George to the Earl of Carlisle. The Earl of Carlisle had been made Lord Proprietor of all the colonies in the West Indies, and George Donne (probably through his father's influence) had been appointed the military commander of the Isle of St. Christopher (St. Kitts). The islands were captured by the Spanish in the fall of 1629. The articles of surrender required the English colonists to return to England. George Donne and four others, including a relative of Carlisle's, George Hay, were taken to Spain as hostages to ensure that the terms of the surrender were carried out. On 7 May 1629/30 Carlisle learned that the hostages were at Cadiz through a Captain Richard Plumleigh, who reported that the hostages were in great want and that he gave them money and advice.

Donne's inquiries about George remained unanswered. George Donne continued as a Spanish prisoner for another three years after his father's death (Bald, Life 520).

As Bald (Life 520) also notes, this series of letters to Garrard refers to a lady Donne calls the Diamond Lady, or the Lady of the Jewel. Bald suggests that Donne has loaned the lady money, and she had left a jewel of much greater value than the loan as security. Bald's explanation of Donne's possession of the lady's diamond could be correct. Perhaps the most likely candidate for the diamond lady is the Countess of Huntington. Donne's letters imply that he is doing a favor to someone who has been kind to him, someone he trusts, and someone with whom he is in contact through Garrard. The letter further indicates that "the diamond lady" is not part of the family Garrard is presently serving (Algernon Percy, 10th Earl of Northumberland). Donne's attitude to the lady and Garrard's role as intermediary in the affair suggest that the Countess of Huntington is the lady.

224

[George Garrard]

SIR,

I Should not only send you an account by
my servant, but bring you an account of-
ten my self, (for our letters are our selves,
and in them absent friends meet) how I
do, but that two things make me forbear
that writing: first, because it is not for my
gravity, to write of feathers, and strawes,
and in good faith, I am no more, conside-
red in my body, or fortune. And then be-
cause whensoever I tell you how I doe, by
a Letter, before that Letter comes to you,
I shall be otherwise, then when it left me.

At this time, I humbly thank God, I am only not worse; for, I should as soon look for Roses at this time of the year, as look for increase of strength. And if I be no worse all spring, then now, I am much better, for, I make account that those Church services, which I would be very loth to decline, will spend somewhat; and, if I can gather so much as will bear my charges, recover so much strength at *London*, as I shall spend at *London*, I shall not be loth to be left in that state wherein I am now, after that's done; But I do but discourse, I do not wish; life, or health, or strength, (I thank God) enter not into my prayers for my self: for others they do; and amongst others, for your sick servant, for such a servant taken so young, and healed so long, is half a child to a master, and so truly I have observed that you have bred him, with the care of a father. Our blessed Saviour look graciously upon him, and glorifie himself in him, by his way of restitution to health; And by his way of peace of conscience in

Your very true friend and servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: *Letters* No. 82 (240-41)

Collation

Letters: 1651, 54

Poems: 1635-1719

Title:	*To my honoured friend* G.G. *Esquire*.	*Letters*	pp. 240-41
		1719	pp. 242-43
	To my honour'd friend G.G. Esquier	1635	pp. 286-87
	To my honour'd friend G.G. Esquire.	1639	pp. 286-87
		1649, 50, 54	pp. 276-77
		1669	pp. 273-74

SIR,] SIR 1635-1719

l. 1 only] onely 1635-69

ll. 2-3 often myself] often by my selfe, 1635-1654
often by my self, 1669 often by my self 1719

l. 3 Letters] letters 1635-1719 selves] selves, 1635-1719

l. 5 do] doe 1635-54 forebear] forebeare 1635-54

l. 6 writing:] writing; 1635-1719

l. 7 gravity] gravitie 1635 1719 feathers,] feathers 1719
strawes,] straws; 1635-54 strawes; 1669 1719

ll. 8-9 considered] considering 1649-1719

l. 9 fortune. And] fortune, and 1635-1719 then] than 1719

l. 10 tell] tel 1649-54 doe,] do, 1669 do 1719

l. 11 Letter] letter 1635-1719

l. 12 be] bee 1635 otherwise] otherwayes 1635-39 1669
otherways 1649-54 1719 then] than 1669 1719
me.] me: 1635-1719

l. 13 time,] time (1635-1719 thank] thanke 1635-39
God,] God) 1635-1719

l. 14 only] onely 1635-54 worse;] worse, 1635-1719
for,] for 1635-1719 soon] soone 1635-39
look] looke 1635-39

l. 15 Roses] Roses, 1635-69 time] season 1635-1719
yeare] yeare 1635-39 look] looke 1635-39

l. 16 strength. And] strength; and 1635-1719

l. 17 spring] Spring 1635-39 then] than 1635-39 1669 1719

ll. 17-18 better,] better; 1635-1719

l. 18 for,] for 1635-1719 those] Those 1669

ll. 18-19 Church services,] Church-services 1635-69
Church-services, 1719

l. 19 would be very loth] am loath 1635-69 am loth 1719

l. 20 and] & 1635-69

l. 21 bear] beare 1635-39

l. 22 *London*] London 1669

1. 23 *London*] London 1669 loth] loath 1635-69

1. 24 state wherein I am] state I am 1635-1719
that's] that is 1635-39 1669 1719 that is is 1649-54

1. 25 done; But] done; but 1635-69 done But 1719
do] doe 1635-54 do] doe 1635-39

1. 26 life,] life 1669 strength, (I] strength, I 1635-1719
thank] thanke 1635-39 God)] God 1635-39
God, 1649-1719

1. 27 prayers,] prayers 1719 self:] selfe: 1635-39
self; 1669 1719

1. 28 they do;] they often doe; 1635-39 they doe, 1649-1719

11. 29-36 your sick servant, for such a servant taken so young, and healed so long, is half a child to a master, and so truly I have observed that you have bred him, with the care of a father. Our blessed Saviour look graciously upon him, and glorifie himself in him, by his way of restitution to health; And by his way of peace of conscience in] your self and sonne, whom I beseech God to blesse [bless 1669 1719] with the same blessings [blessing 1669 1719] which I begg [beg 1639-1719] for the children [children, 1719] and for the person of 1635-1719
Your very true friend and servant in Chr. Jes.] *Your friend and humble servant / in Christ Jesus*, 1635-54
Your friend and humble servant / in Christ Jesus. 1669

No date] Alery hatch
or address] Novemb. 2.
1630. 1635-1719

J. Donne.] I.D. 1635-1719

Textual Notes

The text of this letter contains significant variations between the 1635 *Poems* and the *Letters*. The 1635 *Poems* includes a date and a location for where the letter was written, but omits a passage that appears in the *Letters* about the close relationship between Garrard and his servant. The next letter in this series of letters to Garrard contains a closing that is almost identical to the closing found in the

1635 Poems, which suggests that it was the source of that closing. The editor of the 1635 Poems (probably Walton) apparently replaced the original closing to disguise the fact that Donne was referring to Garrard's servant, not his son. The omission of this passage suggests that the editor of 1635 found something objectionable in it. See the Textual Introduction for a discussion of the authority of the letters that first appear in the 1635 Poems.

Commentary

This letter has a close relationship with Letters No. 107. Donne repeats the general remarks from Letters No. 107 about his poor health which prevents him from preaching or returning to London to convalesce and he sends blessings for Garrard's servant, who is ill. Donne does not repeat the more specific and personal portions of Letters No. 107 dealing with his inquiries about his son George and "the diamond lady."

This letter is dated 2 November 1630 in the 1635 Poems; Bald accepts this date, although he rejects the dating of the other dated letter in this series. Gosse, perhaps unaware of the date in the 1635 Poems, suggests that this letter was written in December 1630. The internal evidence found in the four letters in this sequence suggests that 2 November is approximately correct, although Walton--if he is the editor--can be shown to have incorrectly dated other letters, presumably to add verisimilitude to his account.

225

To my very much Honoured friend George
Garret Esquire [George Garrard].

SIR,

WHen we thinke of a friend, we do not count that a lost thought, though that friend never knew of it. If we write to a friend, we must not call it a lost Letter, though it never finde him to whom it was addressed: for we owe our selves that office, to be mindefull of our friends. In payment of that debt, I send out this Letter, as a Sentinell Perdue; if it finde you, it comes to tell you, that I was possessed with a Fever, so late in the year, that I am afraid I shall not recover confidence to come to London till the spring be a little advanced. Because you did our poor family the favour, to mention our George in your Letters to Spain, with some earnestnesse, I should wonder if you never had any thing from thence concerning him; he having been now, divers moneths, in Spaine. If you be in London and the Lady of the Jewell there too, at your conveniency informe me, what is looked for at my hands, in that businesse; for, I would be loath to leave any thing in my house, when I die, that were not absolutely mine own. I have a servant, Roper, at Pauls house, who will receive your commandments, at all times. God blesse you and your sonne, with the same blessings which I begge for the children, and for the person of

Your poor friend and humble
servant in Chr. Jes.
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 110 (286-87)

Also in Gosse (II: 267-68)

Notes

l. 9 Sentinell Perdue: Lost scout

l. 27 Pauls house: Donne's residence at St. Paul's Cathedral

Commentary

Gosse (II: 266) suggests that this letter should be dated December 1630. Bald suggests that this letter is the third in the series of four to Garrard written two or three weeks after the letter of 2 November. Both Gosse and Bald date these four letters to Garrard according to their views of the sequence of the letters. Gosse, because he accepts the date of 7 January 1630/31 for the fourth and final letter, dates the two middle letters in December. Bald (Life 519, n. 3) rightly discards the January date and from internal evidence dates the fourth letter before Christmas, possibly as early as 10 December.

This letter's place as third in the sequence of four to Garrard is indicated by Donne's second inquiry about his son George that obviously refers to the first one in the 2 November letter and to Garrard's reply to that letter, and by a second stage in the "diamond lady's" business: Donne asks Garrard to find out what she wants him to do.

1631

226

To my Noble friend M^{ris} Cokain [Mrs. Cokayne] at Ashburne.

My noblest sister,

BUt that it is sweetned by your command, nothing could trouble me more, then to write of my self. Yet, if I would have it known, I must write it my self; for, I neither tell children, nor servants, my state. I have never good temper, nor good pulse, nor good appetite, nor good sleep. Yet, I have so much leasure to recollect my self, as that I can thinke I have been long thus, or often thus. I am not alive, because I have not had enough upon me to kill me, but because it pleases God to passe me through many infirmities before he take me either by those particular remembrances, to bring me to particular repentances, or by them to give me hope of his particular mercies in heaven. Therefore have I been more affected with Coughs in vehemence, more with deafenesse, more with toothach, more with the vurbah, then heretofore. All this mellows me for heaven, and so ferments me in this world, as I shall need no long concoction in the grave, but hasten to the resurrection. Not onely to be nearer that grave, but to be nearer to the service of the Church, as long as I shall be able to do any; I purpose, God willing, to be at London, within a fortnight after your receit of this, as well because I am under the obligation of preaching at Pauls upon Candlemas day, as because I know nothing to the contrary, but that I may be called to Court, for Lent service; and my witnesse is in heaven, that I never left out S. Dunstans, when I was able to do them that service; nor will now; though they that know the state of that Church well, know that I am not so bound, as the world thinks, to preach there; for, I make not a shilling profit of S. Dunstans as a Church man, but as my L. of Dorset gave me the lease of the Impropriation, for a certain rent, and a higher rent, the my predecessor had it at. This I am fain to say often, because they that know it not,

have defamed me, of a defectiveness towards that Church; and even that mistaking of theirs I ever have, and ever shall endevour to rectifie, by as often preaching there, as my condition of body will admit. All our company here is well, but not at home now, when I write; for, lest I should not have another return to London, before the day of your Carrier, I write this, and rest
15 Jan. 1630.
Abrey-hatch. Your very affectionate servant,
and friend, and brother
J. Donne.

Source: Letters No. 129 (316-18)

Also in Gosse (II: 269-70)

Textual Notes

1. 43 the: then [than]: compositor error

Commentary

In this letter Donne repeats the plan he has earlier written of to George Garrard to return to London in time to preach on Candlemas Day. Donne is more revealing about his illness to Mrs. Cokayne and reveals that he knows he is dying. Donne's statement that his infirmities are "fermenting" him in this world, and thus shortening his stay in the grave before he is resurrected, echoes an idea that he uses in a prose letter to Mrs. Cokayne (No. 217) and in the verse letter to the Countess of Bedford written before 1612, "Epitaph on Himselfe" (see Milgate 271-72). In the verse letter Donne also plays with the paradox that a rotting body is a more desirable state than a healthy one because it means a person is closer to dissolution and, hence, resurrection. In the verse letter Donne pretends to be dead and tells the Countess of Bedford

> Though no stone tell thee what I was, yet thou
> In my graves inside see what thou art now:
> Yet thou'art not yet so good, till us death lay
> To ripe and mellow here, we'are stubborne Clay.
> Parents make us earth, and soules dignifie
> Us to be glasse; here to grow gold we lie.
> Whilst in our soules sinne bred and pamper'd is,
> Our soules become wormeaten carkases;
> So we our selves miraculously destroy.
> Here bodies with lesse miracle enjoy
> Such priviledges, enabled here to scale
> Heaven, when the Trumpets ayre shall them exhale.
> (Milgate 103)

Donne concludes this letter with a lengthy defence of his conduct with respect to the parish of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West. Donne was appointed Vicar after the death of Dr. White on 1 March 1623/24. Donne's first sermon as Vicar was preached on 11 April 1624 (Bald, Life 14).

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APPENDIX I

DONNE'S LATIN LETTER

227

HEN. GOODEERE [To Sir Henry Goodyer].

ETiam vulgari linguâ scriptae testantur literaenos amicorum meminisse, sed alienâ, nos de illis meditari. In illis enim affulgent nobis de amicis cogitatiunculae, sed ut matutinae stella transeunt, & evanescunt: In his ante haeremus, & immor amur, & amicos uti solem ipsum permanentem nobiscum degentemque contemplamur; Habes cur Latine. Ipsius etiam scribendi audi rationem. Peto consilium, in quo simul amicitiam prositeor meam, uamque agnosco: Etenim non libenter nosmetipsos exuimus, aut in ingenÿ prudentiaeve dotibus aliorum nos fatemur indigos. Nec certe quicquam quisquam (sit modo ingenuus) ei denegabit a quo consilium petiit. Quodenim divina sapientia extremum charitatis terminum posuerat, animam ponere, idem regularum Ecclesiaetractatores (quod ipsimet Canonici crassam aquitatem vocant   defama & honore cedendo asserunt & usurpant. Certe, non tam beneficiis obnoxii quam consiliis reddimur. Sed adrem. Philosophentur otiosiores, aut quibus otia sua negotia appellare lubet: Nobis enim nos dudum perspicui sumus & fenestrati. Elucescit mihi nova, nec inopportuna, nec inutilis (paulo quam optaram fortassis magis inhonor a) occasio extera visendi regna, liberos perquam amanti imae conjugis charissima pignora, caetera   hujus aur ae oblectamenta, aliquot ad annos relinquendi. De hoc ut tecum agerem te convenire cupio: Quod (et si nec id recusem) nollem in aedibus Barlotianis. Habeo cur abstineam. Amicitiae enim nec veteris, nec it a strictae munera paulo quam deceat imprudentiori impetu mihi videor ibi peregrisse. Prandere si vacat foras, aut caenare, horulamve perdere pomeridianam, aut matutinam liceat mihi i ud apud Rabbinum Lincombum jam commoranti per te intelligere, & satis mihi fiet. Interim seponas oro chartulas meas, quas cum sponsione citae redhibitionis (ut barbare, sed cum ingeniosissimo Appollinari loquar) accepisti. Inter quas, si epigrammatamea Latina, & Catalogus librorum satyricus non sunt, non sunt; extremum iuditium, hoc est, manum ultimam jamjam subiturae sunt. Earum nonnullae Purgatorium suum passurae, ut correctiores emanent. Alia quorum me inscio in mundum erepserunt, exempla tamen in archetypis igne absumpt a satebuntur se a me ad Inferos damnata esse. Reliquae quae aut virgines sunt (nisi quod a multis contrectatae) ant it a infaeliciter steriles. ut ab illis nulla ingenita sunt exemplaria, penitus in annhilationem (quod flagitiosissimis non minatur Deus) corruent & dilabentur. Vale & amore meo fruere quem vetat

fortuna sola ne uti possis. Et nisi animo candido ingenuave mea libertate gaudere malis, habe tibi mancipium

JO. DONNE.

Source: Poems 1633 (351-52)

Translation

To Henry Goodyer

Indeed if a letter written in the vernacular shows that we remember our friends, one written in a foreign tongue proves that we think of them. The former expresses the light thoughts which we entertain about our friends, but which vanish as the morning stars fade; whereas the latter makes us stop and ponder, regarding our friends as the sun itself, which exists only for us. Hence this letter in Latin.

Now for the reason of my writing. I am looking for advice: by this I profess my friendship at the same time as I acknowledge yours, for indeed it is not willingly that we bare ourselves or acknowledge our need for the intelligence and sagacity of others. And certainly nobody, provided he be of a noble mind, will refuse anything to one asking for advice: what divine wisdom had laid as the extreme limit of charity--to offer one's soul--the interpreters of Church laws have annexed and usurped in order to gain fame and honours; even the clerics call it dull justice. We are certainly dependent on advice more than on favours. But to the point.

The idle talk philosophy, or at least this is what they like to call their idle business; but we have for some time displayed window-like transparence. There comes to me a new opportunity, neither inconvenient nor unfit (although perhaps a little more devoid of honours than I had hoped) to see outside kingdoms--and leave for a few years my children, the sweet pledges of a most loving wife, and all the other delights of my present life. I would like to meet you to talk the matter over; only I do not want to do so in the Bartletts' house (although I would not refuse categorically). Here is why: I seem to have exhausted the good graces of a friendship that was neither old nor very close, because of an impulse that was more rash than was considered fit.

If you have time to partake of luncheon or dinner, or just waste a wee hour morning or afternoon, I could hear about this while staying here at Rabbi Tincomb's, and this would be good enough for me. In the meantime, please put aside the writings which I sent you upon the promise of having them returned promptly (this may be put in a coarse way, but with the cleverness of an Apollo). Among which, if my Latin epigrams and my satirical Catalogue of Books are not there, so be it; they are going to submit to the ultimate judgement, in other words they will receive a final thrust. Some of them will suffer their purgatory in order to emerge corrected. Others have crept into the world without my knowing; yet once the originals have been consumed by fire it will be clear to all that I have damned them to hell. The remainder, which are either virginal (except insofar as they have been touched by many hands) or so unhappily barren that they have failed to produce copies, can collapse and crumble into the depths of nothingness, which God finds too harsh even for the greatest infamy.

Goodbye. Accept my love, which forbids that you may rely on fortune alone; and if you prefer not to rejoice in my sincere spirit and my plain speaking, feel free to do so.

Commentary

The occasion for Donne's Latin letter to Sir Henry Goodyer was Sir Robert Drury's invitation to Donne to accompany him on a trip to Europe beginning sometime in 1611. Drury's licence to travel was granted on 2 July 1611. Donne's Latin letter was probably written about this time. The trip was not actually begun until November 1611. Between the time of the invitation and the November departure, Donne gave up his house at Mitcham and arranged for his wife and children to stay with John Oglander (later Sir John) of Nunwell on the Isle of Wight. In both this letter and the only letter written in English about the trip (also written to Sir Henry Goodyer), Donne expresses doubt that the trip will lead to any employment for him at court. He was right. It was of no use to either him or Sir Robert Drury. See Bald's (*Life* 238-62) and his earlier *Donne and the Drurys*, which deals in great detail with Donne's relations with Sir Robert Drury.

APPENDIX II

DONNE LETTERS WRITTEN FOR OTHERS

228

To the Honourable Knight Sir
Henry Goodere [From Goodyer to the Earl of
Salisbury].

SIR,

BEcause to remain in this sort guilty in your Lordships opinion doth not onely defeat all my future indevours, but lay a heavyer burden upon me, of which I am more sensible, which is ingratitude towards your Lordship; by whose favours I have been formerly so much bound; I hope your Lordship will pardon me this care and diligence which I use to rectifie my self towards you. To which purpose I humbly beseech your Lordship, to admit thus much into your consideration, that I neither hunted after this businesse at first, but apprehended it as it was presented to me, and might perchance have fallen into worse hands, nor proceeded otherwise therin, then to my poor discretion at that time seemed lawfull and requisite and necessary for my reputation, who held my selfe bound to be able to give satisfaction to any who should doubt of the case. Of all which, if your Lordship were returned to your former favourable opinions of me, you might be pleased to make this some argument, that after his Majesty had shewed his inclination to the first motion made in my behalf, I was not earnest to urge and solicit that advantage of priority, but as became me, contented my self to joyne with him who had made a later petition therein: and as soon as I understood how it was opposed or distasted, I threw it down at your Lordships feet, and abandoned it to your pleasure. Which it is necessary for me to say at this time, lest, if he who was interessed with me in that businesse shall have proceeded any farther therein since that time, your Lordship might conceive new suspicions of me. That your Lordships name was at all used therein, or that any words of mine occasioned such an errour in my servant, I am

> so sorry as nothing but a conscience of a true guiltinesse of having performed an injury to your Lordship (which can never fall upon me) could affect me more. But I, who to the measure of my comprehension, have ever understood your Lordships nobility and evenness, cannot fear that your Lordship will punish an oversight, like a crime: which should be effected upon me, if your Lordship should continue your disfavour towards me, since no penalty could come so burdenous to my minde and to my fortune as that. And since the repose of both consists in your Lordships favour, I humbly intreat to be restored to your favour, giving your Lordship my faith in pawn that I wil be as wary of forfeting it by any second occasion, as I am sorry for this.
>
> Yours J. D.

Source: *Letters* No. 98 (267-69)

Also in Gosse (II: 51-52)

Commentary

Stanley Johnson ("Sir Henry Goodere and Donne's Letters" 38-43) shows that this letter was written in 1609 by Donne for Goodyer to send to the Earl of Salisbury as his own. Johnson prints a transcription of Goodyer's slightly different version of Donne's letter which is written in Goodyer's hand and still preserved at Hatfield House. Since Johnson's article is readily available, I do not reprint the text of Goodyer's letter here. Johnson also cites *Letters* No. 64 (pp. 192-94), in which Donne indicates that he has written two letters for Goodyer and gives examples of Goodyer's use for his own purposes of portions of Donne's letters to him. The precise incident in which Goodyer offended Lord Salisbury is not known. Goodyer, however, was a distant family connection of Salisbury and hoped to gain some kind of grant or revenue from the king through Salisbury to repair his poor financial position.

He received some small grants, but nothing to enable him to approach any kind of financial solvency.

R. C. Bald in Donne and the Drurys lists three letters in Donne's handwriting found in the Regdrave Muniments, University of Chicago Library. Two of these letters were written in English for Sir Robert Drury, and one was written in French for Lady Drury. R. E. Bennett claims that Donne must have composed letters for Sir Robert Drury and to some extent acted as Sir Robert's secretary. Bennett cites two letters from the Continent signed by Drury and not in Donne's handwriting, which nevertheless are in his style. I include the three letters written for the Drurys in Donne's hand.

229

[To Sir Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester]

Though I dare be confident that your Lordships noble disposition, wyll affoord a good interpretation to my longe silence, and forbearinge to present my services to your Lordship, yet I could not forsake myselfe so much, as not to make a right vse of my iust excuses. for my occasions hauinge stayd mee in England, some months after I had the honor to see your Lordship last, and beeinge retarded in my way in france, tyll my poore house at Amyens were put into some fittnes, yt ys not now a fortnight since I began to rest here. And though neyther thys place, nor so shorte tyme, present any thinge, that I could forgiue myselfe to trouble your Lordship withall, yet I hope you wyll make thys an argument, that neyther my former abstinence was out of negligence, nor that any distance shall slacken in mee those affections, and deuotions, which I bear towards your Lordship,

Your Lordships-------

Source: Bald, Donne and the Drurys 91

Commentary

This is a letter sent by Sir Robert Drury to Sir Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester. Rochester was the most powerful courtier at James's court at this time. The letter was sent soon after Sir Robert Drury's arrival in Amiens at the end of November or early December 1611, and was intended to be a letter of compliment to remind Rochester of Drury.

230

[To Sir David Murray]

Sir

A ialousy, least my longe abstinence from giuinge you an account of myself might be subiect to misinterpretation, and appear like a negligence, makes me take the first occasion of presentinge my true excuses. I was by many businesses held in England some months after my purpose of a present cominge away: and in my way in france, I mett with some necessityes of spendinge more tyme then I suspected: so that, in thys, which ys my first restinge place, I haue not yet had a fortnight. And from hence, and in so short tyme, no more can be presented but thys poore testimony, that in all places I shall euer retaine the same disposition of doinge you service, and the same desire of beeinge conservd in your good opinion; of which I cannot receiue a better seruice and effect then that you would be pleasd, at your best commodity to present my humble services to hys highnes, and to continue hym in an assurance, that he hath in these parts a servant that desires nothinge so much as to haue the honor of hys commandements.

Source: Bald, Donne and the Drurys 91

Commentary

This letter was sent about the same time as the preceding letter by Sir Robert Drury. David Murray was the closest friend of Henry, Prince of Wales. This letter is also a letter of compliment to keep Sir Robert Drury in the minds of those who held power or would hold power in the future.

231

[To the Duchesse de Bouillon]

Madame

Come vos vertus sont douees des autres qualites de nostre bon dieu qui vous les a donnees, ainsy participent elles de son infinite. Tellement, qu'estant esloigne de uostre presence, je sens encore vos influences, et trou[u]e en touts lieus des belles impressions de uostre bonte. Je les ay trouue, Madame, en l'accueil, et autres faueurs, dont sont Alteze, et Madamoiselle d'Aurange vos tres-dignes soeurs ont este contentes, par uostre Mediation, honorer leur pauure servante et la vostre. Je les ay trouue dans vos lettres lesquelles iay eu l'honneur auoir de la maine de madamoiselle vostre soeur; Ainsy que par tout je trouue des representations et images de vostre bonte et presence. Mais, quand rien de cela ne m'eust arriue, ma memoire m'en fourniroit abondamment. Car encore que je [ne] suis pas capable d'estre imitatrice de uos vertus sy suis je neantmoins de les admirer, et de conserver vne perpetuelle memoire de leur fruicts et effects par de uers moj, par lesquels vous aves oblige a vne servitude eternelle

vostre tres humble et
tres obeissante servante

Madame, Je vous remercie tres humblement de m'avo[i]r faict l'honneur de me communiquer les bonnes nouuelles de l'auenement de Monseigneur de Bouillon, et de la sante de vos enfans; car je participeray tousiours de vos affections, et auray ma part en tout ce que vous est a coeur ou a regret.*

Source: Bald, *Donne and the Drurys* 101 and facsimile on facing page

Translation

Madam

Just as your virtues reflect other qualities of the good God who bestowed them upon you, so they share in His infinity. So much so that although I am far from you I can still feel your influence and find everywhere expressions of your goodness. I have found these, Madam, in the kind reception and other favours with which Her Highness and Mademoiselle d'Aurange, your most worthy sisters, have deigned to honour, through your mediation, their humble servant who is also yours. I have also found these expressions in the letters which I have been privileged to receive from Mademoiselle your sister. So it is that everywhere I find representations and images of your goodness and presence. But had nothing of the sort occurred, my memory would still produce these impressions in abundance, for although I cannot imitate your virtues I nevertheless can admire them and keep an everlasting memory of their fruits and their effects upon me, by which you have bound to eternal servitude

your most humble and
most obedient servant

Madam, I humbly thank you for deigning to immpart to me the good news of the accession of Monseigneur de Bouillon, and of your children's health; for I shall always make mine your concerns, and share in everything which may rejoice or sadden you.

Textual Notes

1. 5 faueurs: Bald transcribes "faueurs" as "faucuns," which is not a word.

Commentary

Sir Robert Drury and Lady Drury visited the Palatinate and the Elector's court at Heidelberg during the end of May 1612. Apparently, Sir Robert Drury was not pleased with his reception at Heidelberg. However, Lady Drury wrote this letter to the Duchesse de Bouillon, thanking her for her letters of introduction to her sisters and for the kindness with which they received her. The draft of the letter is in Donne's handwriting, but it is signed by Lady Drury (Bald, Donne and the Drurys 100). Thus the letter must have been written in June 1612.

In the letter "Her Highness" refers to the Dowager Electress, and the reference in the postscript to the Duc de Bouillon is to his return from England; he had returned to France by early June (Bald 101).

APPENDIX III

POSSIBLE DONNE LETTERS FROM THE BURLEY MS.

232

[To ?] [After July 1604]

M.C.

To excuse where there is no trespas, is to speake what we could
not what wee need: but if we do need a mutuall pardon freeth
vs both: such is Good Will. At my retorne out of North: I met wth
y^{r} remembraunce, w^{ch} tould me of y^{r} travell abroad, & arrant to
me: for y^{r} advauncem^{t}: for my advice. the former: I assure you
y^{t} as I loue learning for it self where ere I find it. so much
more a learned wisedome purchased by a travellers experiences
I most admire, yea pardon me wth a touch of envy. the latt^{r}
giues me certayne knowledg of y^{r} error: but for t'is error amoris I will excuse it & wish it were not so. To giue you
counsell in these affayres were to offer much more then I can
giue: yet thus much I dare say in generall: that the course
if y^{o} go on good grounds, may be y^{r} fayrest & I wish myself such oportunyty. y^{r} body if I know it wth a spare diet
& good exercise y^{o} may keep sound. for y^{r} mind take but
such a p^{r}paratiue as y^{r} Cosin Nay: out of his experiance can
p^{r}scribe y^{o}, & I doubt not y^{o} shall go well instructed for y^{e}
best of knowledg. What y^{o} know already I can tell y^{o}, that
abroad tis best being trusty to y^{r} self, & keep all secrets
at home lockt vp wth y^{o}. Common curtesies bring good acquaintaunce that againe giues oportunyty to observe that w^{ch}
happyly is not in vs: but in all keep distaunce still. to intrust
as a secret y^{t} w^{ch} is not, in some kind of people wins there
loue: seeme to suspect none. seeme not to observe, be not
covetuous of newes. nor lavish in report. to be factious in
any religion where are many may breed y^{o} daunger
curtesy y^{o} shall find much more common there then honesty
p^{r}serve y^{e} one, the other y^{o} may requite y$^{[e]}$ wthout much
cost. for y^{r} private wth S^{r}. H. W. I can say nothing
for I know not y^{r} employment nor what course
y^{o} meane to hold wth him: In these kind of courses
or the like we see so many hopes so many discontentments all such vncertaynteis crossing each other still
in all, y^{t} I find my self far below y^{e} degree of a counnseller to direct in any. p varios casus ptot discrimina
reru tendimus in Latiu sedes vbi fata quietas ostendunt.
Y^{r} desire hath made me betray my weakenes. the
messeng^{r} that brought y^{r} note stays for this therfore no
more. Loue me as y^{o} were wont & I will nev^{r} cease
to bee

y^{r}. H^{l}. S.

Source: Burley MS. f. 300

Transcription Notes

l. 14 "Cosin Nay": possibly Cosin May

l. 30 "Tendimus": Transcript "tendring" (Simpson, Prose Works 323)

Notes

l. 30 per varios casus per tot discrimina rerum tendimus Latium sedes vbi fata quietas ostendunt (Virgil, Aen. i 204-06): Through various circumstances and through so many critical moments, we proceed towards the Latium where destiny reveals tranquil abodes. See also The Aeneid, trans. by Robert Fitzgerald (I, ll. 278-81).

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 323) dates the letter after July 1604 when Wotton was knighted, but does not attempt to identify explicitly the writer or the recipient. Her placement of the letter, however, among the others she attributes to Donne implies that she thinks Donne may have written it, despite the initials in the closing that indicate otherwise. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") rejects altogether that this letter was written by Donne. Some parts of the letter suggest his phrasing, including, among others, the parallel sentences on body and mind, and the sentence "What you know already I can tell you . . . ." If the letter is Donne's, it may have been badly mangled in copying.

233

[To ?] [date?]

That increase of his greatnes although it were enough to warme his blood & the vessels of spirits in him yet certayne hath neither in his [amb-vare-] nor minde made any new impressions w^{ch} I do the more wonder att, bycause methought I found that day myself a little raysed in myne owne conceipt: as servants clyme vpp vpon theire masters fortunes.

Source: Simpson (324) (Burley MS. f. 302^{v})

Transcription Notes

l. 3 The writing is poor. I rely on Simpson's transcription because I cannot decipher much of the MS. The square brackets in ll. 2-3 contain my guess at the letters, although they do not make a word.

Commentary

Simpson (*Prose Works* 324) indicates that there is no indication of the writer or the date of this fragment of a letter. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") rejects this as a Donne letter. There is no evidence to indicate that this letter was written by Donne.

234

[To ?] [date?]

S^{r}.

I am come but a litle nerer to y^{o}, and I am already att my tropicke w^{ch} I canot yet transgresse: I made a promise to y^{o} of sending my footeman. and though perchance y^{o} would easyly forgiue me this promise yet my love of a good conscience and zeale in this religion of keeping promise sends him. I always loued an innocence better then a pardon: and [had] rather haue true grace then reputed. I do you a litle honor in this message: for I enable y^{o} to performe

y^{t} w^{ch} a great conqueror out of his abondance promised to those y^{t}
would come to him y^{t} those w^{ch} came footemen should retorne horsemen
Att y^{r} last being att london you tooke (as phisitians say wisemen should so
of wine) generosum haustum a gallant full draught of o^{r}
london pleasures: and therefore I do not hope to see y^{o} so dry as to
tast vs againe: I must therefore haue leaue here at home &
from y^{o} to see y^{o} in y^{r}. E. w^{ch}. I desire much & by the goodnes of my loue
am worthy y^{t} y^{o} desire itt too. From D. parke M^{r}. m
house to whome wth m^{r}. S. & me all prayse & loue &
remembrance of y^{o} be now & for ever most welcome Amen.

Source: Burley MS., f. 303

Transcription Notes

l. 4 [promis'd?] an undecipherable word is crossed out at the end of line 4.

Notes

l. 11 generosum haustum: generous draught

Commentary

Simpson offers no comment on this letter. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") suggests that this letter was possibly written by Donne. If this is a Donne letter, the most likely date would be the summer of 1614 and the most likely correspondent, Sir Robert More. During the summer of 1614 Donne several times borrowed a horse from his brother-in-law to go to Court in his pursuit of a position promised him by the Earl of Somerset and which he was led to believe would be given him by the King when he presented himself. Of course, Donne could have borrowed a horse any time (the subject of this letter is sending his man to get it), but the closing Amen of this letter is more characteristic of Donne's later letters.

235

[To ?] [date?]

S^{r}. I haue receaued a very kind lettr from y^{o} w^{ch} promiseth many more hereafter when this is more then ever I shall demerit. Howbeit I am very content of them, as some men that loue to borrow money yet know not how to repay. Wherefore I would haue y^{o} first acquainted wth my estate lest when you thinke but to lend y^{o} in effect do giue: you cannot chuse but loose much by the bargaine, receaving empty lines for letters frought wth intelligence and matter Y^{rs} shall serve as so many obligations wherein I stand bound vnto y^{o}; and the most y^{t} myne can serve is an acknowledgment and confession of the debt; w^{ch} I shall then imagine y^{o} demand at my hands whensoever y^{o} giue over that w^{ch} y^{o} haue now begun.

Source: Burley MS., f. 302^{v}

Transcription Notes

l. 1 An undecipherable word after "promiseth" is crossed out.

Commentary

Simpson (*Prose Works* 326) suggests that the letter, which cannot be dated, was possibly by Donne to a new friend. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") rejects this letter altogether. Simpson points out a parallel passage in a letter of Donne's to Wotton in the 1651 *Letters* (pp. 120, 121):

> '. . . especially such Letters as mine, which (perchance out of the dulnesse of the place) are so empty of any relations, as that they oppresse not your meditations, nor discourse, nor memory. . . . How shall I then who know nothing write Letters? Sir, I learn knowledge enough out of yours to me. I learn that there is truth and firmnesse and an earnestnesse of doing good alive in the world. . . .'

236

[To?] [date?]

S^{r}. To write to you newes were to giue you a coppie of the original that you haue already receaued: yet some what I must ~~say-only-a-few~~ tell you (though it may be superfluous) only to lett you knowe that I doe not make daynty of my paines. . I pray pardon my want of ceremony you shall find my loue wthin my lett^{r} & y^{r} Lp on the backe of my lett^{r}.

Source: Burley MS., f. 300^{v}

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 325) states that this letter gives no indication of its date or authorship. Shapiro rejects "altogether" this letter as one of Donne's. The letter was obviously a covering letter which enclosed an earlier letter.

237

[To ?] [date?]

S^{r}. I am so far from telling y^{o} what day y^{o} may meete mee at London that I am not here suffered ~~what~~ to resolue wth whome I dine to morrow: for I find here more kindnesses then I can tell how to dispose off: w^{ch} is one of the happiest pouerties y^{t} I have yet falne into: beleeue me this is a place of much contentment, Iuuenes et viri, occurrunt salutant, invitant Ingens messis est. y^{o} shall grace me wth the newest occurrents by this carrier of whome I will demand itt on saturday: In the meane while be satisfyed wth these few lines from a man that wheresoever he is doth languish wthout y^{o}.

Source: Burley MS., f. 303^{v}

Transcription Notes

l. 2 "what" is stroked out.

Notes

1. 5 Iuuenes et viri, occurunt salutant, invitant Ingens messis est: Young men and men come up and salute you and invite you it's a huge harvest.

Commentary

Simpson does not comment on this letter. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") thinks that it is possibly by Donne. This letter might be related to Burley MS. f. 303 (Simpson's No. 21), which also discusses when the writer and recipient can meet.

238

[To Sir Henry Wotton?] [1599?/1604-10?]

If you [please to] write I will wth all gladnes answere y^{r} letters: yf you
please to be sylent yet will I answere y^{r} affection w^{ch}
need not be testified vnto [me] by letters; whereof myne owne
sure knowledg and [the] cleernesse of my soule [vnto] you will
not suffer me to haue the least doubt. You haue all
liberty wth me, all authoritie ouer me. Only it
doth very much trouble me that any thing (what I cannot
ghesse) should depriue me of the happines I was wont to
haue in y^{r} letters whereby I haue enioyed you at such
distants: yt makes me doubt least I haue made some
fayle in iudgment (for other it is impossible) if so, I desire
you to shew it me, and chyde for I will take it kindly
and amend; if not, then chyde y^{r} self in my behalf; for
one of these in Justice I craue of you.

Source: Burley MS., f. 302

Commentary

Simpson (Prose Works 328) suggests that the letter was probably from Donne to Wotton. The phrase "Y^r letters whereby I haue enioyed you at such distants" suggests to Simpson either 1599 when Wotton was in Ireland or 1604-1610 during his first embassy to Venice. Shapiro ("The Burley Letters") is "doubtful" that this letter is Donne's.

APPENDIX IV

POSSIBLE DONNE LETTERS FROM THE *TOBIE MATHEWS COLLECTION*

These three letters from the *T.M.C*. (pp. 74, 75, and 76) are considered by J. P. Feil to be possible Donne letters to Sir Tobie Mathew. Feil dates the first late December 1603 by its references to Raleigh's reprieve, and he dates the second and third January 1603/4. According to Feil:

> Matthew would have been out of town for the Christmas holidays; and the business which he had entrusted to the writer might have been related to Matthew's negotiations for Oaking Park [an estate owned by Sr. Eskins, which Sir Frances Wolley, Donne's brother-in-law, was also trying to acquire]. (302, n. 2)

239

A Letter from one dear Friend to another; with a very choise Judgment upon the King's Proceeding, in the Case of those Delinquents who were Tryed at Winchester.

SIR,

I Thank you for making me partaker of your Newes. News, I call them; for, though I had before had a fuller aire of them than indeed I had; yet, your own observation and conceit would deserve that name, or a better. As for the event itself, he who would not be glad of the King's mercy, I would he might need it; namely, when it denies not the fruit of Justice, which, in this case, was already gathered, and laid up safe within doors. For, in point of Terrour, and for Example, the Judgment, the Confiscation, the approach of the Execution of those men, and the actuall Execution of their Complices, had fully satisfied all considerations of State, in persons of no greater danger. And therefore, his Majestie hath received both honour of Justice, and honour of Mercy; yea, and a third honour also, by the well-mingling of them. I thank you likewise for renewing your promise, of comming to my poor house; though I know not, whether your Letter will make me think the time longer or shorter, by reason of the contentment I took in reading it; which yet withall gave me a kind of an imaginary taste, of how much more the like conference would be pleasing to me, by word of mouth. Your businesse, which, you say, is on foot, I wish were on horseback. And as for that particular, which you lately commended to my care, I send you here inclosed, that which concerns it, that so you may see, your request shall not be in vain with me; though yet, perhaps, when you read the Paper, you will find, that the suit was not so very well grounded.

Source: T.M.C. (74-75)

240

A Letter of much kindness from one friend to another.

SIR,

I Wish this Letter no good, for I wish it lost, and that I might see you here, before it do you that service for which it was ordained. But, if it get to you, you may discern, by the shortnesse of it, how shortly I am in hope to see you, and the hearty desire also which I have thereof, by this, that I write upon no other argument, but onely of the same meer desire, &c.

Source: T.M.C. (75-76)

241

Another, of the same kind, between the same friends.

SIR,

I Am glad to find, that you are now about the Equinoctiall of your return to Town; for, I hold you to be a kind of Sun in my Hemisphear. As for me, I have had a good day and a bad; and therefore now, me-thinks, I should in order have again a good. But these things shall serve for a kind of entertainment, when we meet; and in the mean time, I have not forgotten, what you commended so earnestly to my care, when we parted last. And though, as I conceived, you gave me cause to be a little angry with you then, I shall account, that you have made me a full amends, when you let me see you here again.

Source: T.M.C. (76)

APPENDIX V

EXTRACTS FROM DONNE'S LETTERS FOUND IN THE LOSELY MS.

The following extracts from Donne's letters have been transcribed from seven unnumbered pages of Folger MS V.a. 263 which are among the Loseley Manuscripts. Beal (244) suggests that the extracts were taken from a printed source. I have identified where most of these extracts occur in the 1651 *Letters*. Some portions of the extracts, however, do not appear in any of Donne's printed letters. Sparrow suggested that a paraphrase of the Psalms also found in the Loseley Manuscripts may have been a rough draft of Donne's (159-62). The excerpts from Donne's letters are written in a hand somewhat similar to Donne's, but not his, nor his son's. John Donne the younger's hand is less like his father's than the one in these extracts. Sparrow's suggestion about the Psalms likely is correct for these excerpts as well. This would mean, of course, that unidentified passages could be from Donne letters no longer extant or from discarded drafts.

V.a. 263

Letters, p. 8

Wee would wonder to see a man
who in a wood were left to his
liberty to fell what trees he
would, tak[e] only the crooked
& leave the strightest trees:
but that man hath perchance
a shippe to build & not a house
and soo hath use of that kinde
of Timber: Let not us who:
knowe that in Gods house there
are many mansions by yet
have nor modell nor design;
of the forme of that building
wonder at his taking in of
his material , why hee takes
the young & leaues the
old; or why the sickly ouerliue
those that had better health.
{So likewise the worke to confound }
{the strong. but how [ee] that same}
{God at a $^{\text{nearer}}$ Distance--   }
{cries $^{\underline{\text{out}}}$ L how unsearchable   }
{are his [   ] and his waies.   }
{   able   }

unidentified

V.a. 263 (2)

Out of the Vanity of mindes it proceeds that though our soules would goe to one end Heauen and all our bodies must Goe to one end earth: yet we think yt the minde which is our naturall guide here chooses to euery man a seuerall way. Scarse any man likes what another doth nor aduisedly that which himselfe--	*Letters*, p. 72
The primitive Christians out of prudence admitted me of the Jews Ceremonies not for perpetuale use but because they would bury the Synagogue honourably.	*Letters*, p. 122 See also p. 297
{Circumcidit w^t circumcisionarum } {[[to l--t].* saith St. Chrisostame } {of S^t.Paule. } *Form of verb *tolere* (to take away)	unidentified

V.a. 263 (3)

to make theyr actions currant
which is if either they get
praise, or ~~if~~ (in a lower abasing)
if they incurr not infamy or
penalty.

Letters, p. 98

If [   ] that
some [   ] of theyr Estate,
liue better wth halfe theyr Estates
than all . . being now advantaged
w^{t} by discretion & experience.
[   ] that our [   ]
times haue less of morall
vertue though more of [   ]
Christianity. as if Religion was
but an art of things or
Gods husbandry to make a litle
vertue goe farre

Letters, pp. 98-99

A paraphrase?

(3 + 4)

I haue euer seen in London and
our -Court as some   [Colours] and
habits & continuances and
motions & phrases and accents
& [   ] songs so friends in
fashion and in season & I haue
[seen them] [so] soddenly abandoned
[altogether], though I see -no
change in them, nor knowe
more why they were left then
why they were chosen.

Letters, pp. 27-28

V.a. 263 (4)

C

Extract from Letters, p. 97

Vertue is euen and continuall and
the same; and can therefore
breake nor where nor admit
ends, or beginnings: it is not
only not broken but not tyed
together. Hee is not vertuous
out of whose actions you can
picke an excellent one. Vice
and her fruits may be seen
because they are thicke bodies
but not vertue, which is
all light: and vices haue
swellings & fitts & noise
because being extreams they
dwell farre asunder and they
maintain both a foraiyne warre
against vertue and a ciuill
one against another and
affect soweraignty as vertue
dothe society.

Equal [ ] unidentified
saith [ ]
and [ ] nd suite Spanish Lord

men obnoxious than from the [ ] and most supple to grant [ ] confident in dealing with hys Master of the Rolls [ ] was at that time somewhat [ ].

unidentified

In states, it is a weakenesse to stand upon a defensive warre, safer not to bee inuaded than to haue ouercome. [the wissoome of prevention being infinitely beyond the wissdome of [ ]; considered by Romans in Dealing w^t Philip of Antioch.]

Letters, p. 3

If my con[ ] that the E. of Salisbury some yeares before his death was at a Defensiue warre both for hys honour + health--

Letters, p. 89

and if [ ] have given [been] thought}
that [ ] spake }
of enuy. }

unidentified

V.a. 263 (6)

Writers finde noe fitter way to drawe Readers to admire theyr writings than in discommending them themselves	unidentified
[ ] & consiquen's Let not a man aske eligantly or vehimently [ ] to obtain. and [ ] [ ] that things [ ] are [ ]	{Poems 1633, pp. 353-54 {Letters, p. 110
small [courtesies] sometimes [ ] bee [ ] a liberty to aske greater fauors.	unidentified
Our [assiat] and [am] must be upon things not [ ]; if 1,000 will bee constant: neither can the opinion of man alter the nature of things	unidentified
Angusta innocentia __ ad Legem bonum esse sai_ statua men who have preferred money before all think they deal honorably with vertue if they if they compa[re] [h]er with money & think that [as money is not called] base til the alloy exceed the pure Soe they are vertuous enough if they have enough	{Poems 1633, p. 357 {Letters, p. 98 {Poems, p. 357 {Letters, p. 98

V.a. 263 (7) blank

(8)

Letters, p. 89

It is not the first time that our Age
hath seen that art practised: that
when there are witty and sharpe Libels
made which not only for the liberty
of speaking but for the Eligancy and
composition would take deep root
and make durable impressions in
the memory, noe other way hath been
thought such fit to suppresse them, as to
diuulge some course: & railing one.
for when the noise is risen that libels
are abroad mens curiosity must bee
serued with something. I tis
better for the honour of the person
traduced that some blunt downright
railings bee vented of which every one
is soon weary than other peices
which entertain us long with a
delight and loue to the things
themselves. [ ]
{[ ] conjecture that E. of Salisbury} unidentified
{but this Artifice--that when}
{sharpe witty libels were published}
{by some of the Roman to suborne}
{some of his friends to nullifie some}
{flatt railing stuffe against them}
{to confound away [ ] of him}
{& to discord. I}

V.a. 263 (9)

ignorance than
~~nor-doe-men~~ [never was] before they~~re~~[ys] Anothers
but confound since ina free state
all men ought to enjoy both theyr
mindes and tongues free
. The lapwing t h
lapwing.
when power may commaund
too much
bondage when it stoopes to il
interests
Some would interpret
to ~~gover-n~~---children to bee
particular [ ] and that
under[ ] of service to [ ]

unidentified

[ ] the strength he both
made to give both by the [ ]
something by, [ ] fashon in court
[ ] by the [ ] holds
himselfe [ ]
by popularity [ ] his
[ ] to this [ ]
[ ] Lastly his [ ]
[ ] for our [ ].

V.a. 236 (p. 10)

ye [ ] unidentified
able to examine + con[ ] those
suggestions: but were they lost
our absoluing voice would [ ]
pronounce upon, as we thinke them
most [ ].